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STUART OF DUNLEATH.

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VOL. II

STUART OF DUNLEATH.

A STORY OF MODERN TIMES.

BY

THE HON. MRS. NORTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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STUART OF DUNLEATH.

CHAPTER I.

A CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

THE news of a terrible event spreads like wildfire. Within the next four-and-twenty hours, all the neighbourhood far and near, knew that Miss Raymond was penniless, and that her guardian had committed suicide. The confusion and misery at Aspendale was increased by a misfortune more especially affecting Emma. Old Mr. Fordyce had a stroke of the palsy that morning, and she went home to nurse her father.

VOL. II.

B

Lady Margaret, who had got as far as Edinburgh on her way to Lanark's Lodge, returned to nurse and comfort Eleanor. Never was friendship more needed. Eleanor seemed stupified by her grief. She wandered from room to room, sitting down when she was too weary to stand—gazing at the objects round her—starved and faint. For seven years she had taken her place by his side at meals : the attempt to eat anything choked her. All day long she wandered thus ; looking out with a sad stare on the road before the windows ; that beautiful winding road, edged with chestnut and beech trees, where they had so often cantered home together ; where Margaret had fed his horse from her basket of roses, the day Eleanor first felt conscious that she loved him. Looking at his books, but not opening them, for fear of seeing the well-known pencil marks on favourite passages, made by his hand. Looking at his writing-table, where

she had found the taper still burning that morning : and thinking how dreadful seemed the life of that flame, which he had lit, and which had burned long past his death-hour, though the dawn and the sunrise he never saw.

Not daring to go to her mother ; Godfrey sate with her mother ; Godfrey, whose burst of execration remained in her half-conscious memory like the loudest crash among peals of thunder heard during a fearful storm. And her poor mother wept and moaned ; repeating for ever one single sentence :

“ Oh, if Sir John could know how his trust has been betrayed ! Oh, if Sir John could know ! ”

All day long she wandered, alone with her grief ; and when night came, she sate shuddering and still alone, thinking of that other night, of death and silence and preternatural sultriness ; listening to the moan of the autumn wind ; the wind that was blowing

over the garden flowers where they would walk no more; the wind that was blowing over the cold restless waters of the roaring Linn: and seeing nothing but his visionary eyes—those eyes whose tenderness was like an unspoken blessing, whose look of displeasure had seemed to Eleanor in childhood, like that of a rebuking angel: those eyes which had closed for ever, in pain, remorse, and despair!

And in the dim, mournful night she prayed for the suicide; for God's mercy upon him who had braved it by departing, uncalled, from this world of appointed trial. She prayed for him; for there are few women who in their hearts do not lean to prayers for the dead.

It was late on the fifth night that Margaret arrived. Eleanor was no great weeper, and deep grief is sometimes very stony. She was sitting mournful and unoccupied in the half-lit drawing-room, but she rose with a smothered and convulsive shriek as Margaret

entered — beautiful Margaret, whom she fancied once that he loved—and advanced to meet her. Lady Margaret's eyes were swelled with excessive weeping. As they met, she again burst passionately into tears, and catching Eleanor in her arms, she kissed her head, her cheek, her hands.

“Ah!” she sobbed; “I thought I had wept till I could weep no more. My Eleanor, my poor child, this is a bitter day! But you forgive him: I am sure that you forgive him! He is gone—let us bury his faults! We must think what can be done, my poor Eleanor. Oh, who would have believed it of him? he that toiled so patiently to help his mother all his spirited boyhood; he that never owed a farthing, all his tempted youth. Oh, Eleanor, if his mother had lived to see this day! She was removed in time: there are griefs and losses that are God's special mercies, and we, blind worms that we are, will not see it.

My dear, dearest child, what an opening of life for you. But I am a fool! I came here to comfort you—to think what can be done: I have left Euphemia with the Duchess: I will have no thought, no care but you, till we see how things can be settled. Is everything gone? I know nothing but the fact of his death, and your loss of fortune.”

Eleanor gave Margaret her guardian’s miserable letter of explanation, and she read it with tears and broken sobs, and passionate exclamations.

“There is no excusing what he did,” said she; “but, oh! what he must have suffered.”

Margaret’s grief for David comforted Eleanor. She did not analyse it; but it soothed her to be with some one who spoke tenderly, who did not execrate and blame him, as every one did. Every one, except poor old Mr. Fordyce, who had sent for Eleanor the day before, having rallied from the paralytic stroke enough to speak, and un-

derstand what was said to him; and had muttered to her a few sentences in which the words "poor David Stuart" were all she clearly made out.

Poor David Stuart !

Eleanor looked at the good pious old man who had befriended and instructed her childhood; as he lay helplessly there, his grey hair combed smooth by his servant, his blanched hands powerless and still; and she felt a gush of love and gratitude in her suffering heart. The words comforted her, in spite of the smile with which they were spoken : the shocking gentleness of that wandering paralytic smile, which always looks as if the soul were half way on its journey to another world, and but half conscious of beholding what it loved on earth.

Margaret's kindly presence was a comfort and relief to every one; her quenched gaiety and brilliancy were replaced by a degree of active thoughtful tenderness, such as Eleanor

had never witnessed in any one. She went about like a ministering angel, lifting Lady Raymond's crushed spirit, comforting frightened Emma, talking to old Mr. Fordyce as to a child—amusing that clouded spirit, making a gleam of cheerfulness for him, where all had been horror and alarm. Caressing Emma's little children, who were left stranded between the fright of their mother in attendance on their grandfather, and the stern angry gloom of Godfrey. Helping Godfrey himself, with household accounts and arrangements rendered necessary by the crash which had fallen upon them. For Aspendale must be given up; everything must be sold; a great change must come to all. A great, miserable change.

Lady Margaret thought that as soon as all was ready for that change, Lady Raymond might move to the Rectory; but, meanwhile, though agents, and valuers, and lawyers came down from town, though inventories were

made and business transacted all day long, Lady Raymond was never troubled. The door of that luxurious dressing-room was as if it had been the boundary of another world. She lay there on a sofa, in helpless unmolested sorrow, as in the days of her widowhood, when David Stuart first came to Aspendale. The bustle, and confusion, and vexation of spirit; weary exertion; early comings-in and late goings-out, reached her not; her uselessness was held sacred.

Not so with Eleanor; in all that was necessary to be done, she had her share. Lady Margaret knew the value and the duty of exertion in hours of grief, though Lady Raymond did not. It had pleased God that Eleanor's youth should be clouded by a great horror, and she had also to begin the world with utterly different prospects as to riches or poverty. Let her face the future with calm and rational submission to whatever was appointed for her. No one knew what that future would bring

forth. Nothing was certain except that a great deal of present and immediate exertion was required. Let her make that exertion.

Eleanor showed herself worthy of her guide : and, only that these are the scenes the world does not witness, it would have been a sight to touch the hearts of those who had often watched the lovely chaperon enter a ball-room with the shy heiress, to see those two toil together through one of their weary days. The tender care of the pale girl which Margaret took, and yet the rational energy with which she inspired her. The profound sense of God's will in all things, with which she put on one side all murmurs of despair, and yet the cherishing comfort she gave. Always active—not always calm—perhaps Eleanor would have loved her less, if she could have been always calm. Sudden and passionate showers of tears replaced poor Margaret's sudden blushes ; but her tears interrupted nothing of the duties of the hour. From the

time she rose, and first met Eleanor in the morning, till her clear voice read the evening prayer which preceded their parting for the night, she missed no opportunity of service or of consolation.

And Eleanor loved and respected her ; and would have laid bare her every thought of her heart—except one : except that she had loved her guardian, and fancied that he loved her. Over that, the feelings of her young heart closed in silent gloom, as the deep sea closes over a sunken wreck.

And Margaret, whatever might have been the impression produced by David's strange agitation the day of the storm, and when she had first mentioned Sir Stephen's proposals, knew enough now to convince her, that love for Eleanor, at least such love as they had fancied, was far from David's thoughts. Even his last letter, tender and despairing, was rather the letter of a guilty father to his injured child, than any other relation.

To Godfrey only, Godfrey, whom least of all Eleanor would have chosen as her confidant, did she speak in a moment of passion and suffering, so as to leave on his mind the indelible conviction of the attachment she had felt.

He had entered the drawing-room abruptly, with an open letter in his hand; he paused, and remained standing, gazing on Eleanor. At length he said gloomily :

“ These events have made my mother fearfully ill.”

There was a tinge of accusation in his tone, as if Eleanor were responsible for the past horrors. Her lips blanched, and she answered faintly :

“ I, too, have been very ill.”

“ You are young, you are comparatively strong, you cannot suffer as she does ; and but for your fatal encouragement of that wretched man’s assumption of authority, he would never have presumed so far on his position.”

“ Good heavens, Godfrey, I was a child ; I knew nothing of these affairs ;—what terrible what shocking injustice !”

“ You were old enough to encourage and countenance him to a degree that rendered my mother a complete cypher in her own house. The question now is, what is to be done ? I have already restored by deed to my mother, and after her to you, ten thousand pounds of Sir John Raymond’s bequest to me ; the remainder was settled on Emma at our marriage, and I have no power over it. I might have sunk the money in a small annuity for my mother, but I do not conceive I should be doing strict justice towards you.”

“ Oh ! do not speak of me—do not consider me—let my poor mother have whatever there is.”

“ It is not from consideration or regard, but because I think it right ;” said Godfrey, harshly. “ I conceive I best fulfil my duty

by restoring the money which was Sir John Raymond's, to his daughter. I am not to consider my own inclinations or compassion. He would not have bequeathed it to me, had he foreseen you might be penniless. I tell you what I have done; it adds but little to my mother's comfort, though it will destroy my wife's in a great measure, and throw me on my profession for an income. You have more in your power; and you owe it to my poor mother to do all you can."

"I—have more in my power?"

"Yes. Sir Stephen Penrhyn is still willing to marry you?"

"Willing!"

"Willing: proudly and scornfully as you echo it. There is his letter." Eleanor glanced at it; it was directed to Godfrey.

"Sir,

"Not knowing exactly who to address myself to, after the exposure of the swindling

transactions in which it appears Mr. Stuart was engaged, I write to you. I never sought Miss Raymond for her fortune; the late event, therefore, makes no difference in my sentiments. Miss Raymond may wish, under the circumstances, to make the condition that Lady Raymond shall reside with us. Will you state that this will be perfectly agreeable to me.

“Waiting your answer with great anxiety,

“I am, Sir,

“Yours faithfully,

“STEPHEN PENRHYN.”

“Oh! what a letter,” said Eleanor, as the sudden picture of her mother’s dependance on this man, who spoke so slightingly of her lost guardian, rose to her startled mind.

“Oh! what a letter; never—I never can be his wife.”

“I do not know what fault you find with

the letter," said Godfrey; "he assumes your consent; I presume he has built on your encouragement; and in the most frank and straightforward manner, he goes to the next natural point and concedes it. When you know the world, you will know that he is acting generously by you."

"He does not express himself very generously by—others," said Eleanor, with hesitation and sadness.

"How should he? How should any honest man? The infamous treachery of Mr. Stuart—"

"Godfrey," said Eleanor passionately, "let there be an end of this. Say what you will to others; blame him, curse him, if you will; if you have the heart; but to me, to *me*, let his name and his memory remain sacred! He has perished for his fault—for the fortune I would have given him ten times over, to have saved him a day's uneasiness. Oh! that he were here," con-

tinued she, with increasing vehemence, "oh! that he had had patience with life, till I had said to him, 'think no more of it; live; be content; I will earn my bread with you—for you—I will be a governess, a servant.'"

"You will be a Bedlamite, I think," said Godfrey bitterly. "I tell you my mother's fortune is gone, with the fortune you were so willing to lavish with yourself on Mr. Stuart, but which it seems he preferred taking without the incumbrance. My mother is reduced to poverty; her health shaken, the decline of her life embittered by horrors and anxieties, created by the very man who was sacredly empowered to protect her; and instead of feeling as you should about her, you rave and rant about a man who, if he had not drowned himself, might have swung on the gallows! It is very fine to talk of going out as a governess, but is my mother to go out as a governess?"

The last sneer was lost on Eleanor. Pale,

shuddering from head to foot, she sate clutching at the arms of her chair, as if the words Godfrey had spoken would have had power to sink her into the earth but for that support, and looking wildly in his face.

At this moment, Lady Margaret entered. Any one who remembers Pasta's fond and piteous caress to her children in the *Medea*, previous to singing the 'Miseri pargoletti,' the folding of her graceful hands round those little heads, can form some idea of Lady Margaret, as she came forward and folded Eleanor to her bosom; and Eleanor turned and leaned there with a faint moan. The colour flushed in Margaret's cheek.

"What is this, Mr. Marsden?" she said.

"It is, that Eleanor does not choose to hear crimes called by their right names, nor Mr. Stuart's conduct called in question. Infamous hypocrite! with his religion, and piety, and love of the poor!"

Lady Margaret was greatly agitated.

"He was not a hypocrite," said she. "It is the misfortune of weak and irresolute persons that they *seem* hypocrites. He had no strength, and he fell: he is dead—leave the judging him to God! His duty was to guard Eleanor's fortune, and he failed: your duty, in this hour of terror and misery, is to comfort and succour her: are you doing it? Oh! Mr. Marsden, how can *you*, who were yourself an orphan, substitute harshness for protection, where it is so much needed!"

"My harshness," said Godfrey, with bitter triumph, "appears to have been a fairer estimate of Mr. Stuart's character than you ever would allow; and so the end has proved."

He stalked from the room. Margaret turned to Eleanor.

"What is all this? What was he discussing with you, my poor child?" and she stroked the hair back from her forehead, and kissed her.

"They wish me to marry Sir Stephen

Penrhyn," said Eleanor, in a despondent tone; "he has written again. Godfrey says my mother is ruined, and that I ought to consider that."

"But do you not like Sir Stephen? It seemed to me that you preferred him to others, that—"

"Oh! no—no!"

There was a pause. Then Margaret spoke, in a low clear coaxing voice, full of pity, and sweet as her own songs.

"Eleanor, I am sure—I know—that Godfrey has contrived to say whatever he has urged, painfully and gratingly; but do not let that warp your judgment as to his view of what should be done. You are very sad at present: I comprehend how little you can think of the future with any pleasure; but the future must come. This gentleman loves you very dearly: he has given evidence of disinterestedness; he is well spoken of by every one; as far as we can calculate human

probabilities, you would safely entrust your happiness to him.

“When I was very young,” and here Margaret’s voice grew still lower, sweeter, and clearer, “when I was very young, they wished me to marry Mr. Fordyce, who had then great expectations of inheritance; *I* was poor, though you would scarcely think it, Eleanor,—you have no idea what a poor condition a poor dukedom is, with its pomp and stateliness, and feudal memories. My only brother was abroad, finishing his education; my father and mother dead; my good old grandmother living in the gaunt grey castle at Lanark’s Lodge, like one of the benevolent fairies in old magic tales. We saw very few people; yet even among these few, I had my girlish preference.”

Margaret suddenly stopped, and the tears rose to her eyes; then she ended more hurriedly, and very earnestly:

“I do assure you, my dearest Eleanor,

that I was so perfectly happy with Mr. Fordyce, I loved him so entirely, that I have sometimes doubted whether any other lot could have satisfied my heart as well. My married life was one of unbroken sunshine: I would not have changed my noble-hearted husband for any other human being. I have smiled when people have spoken of the disparity of our ages, of our change of prospects when an unexpected marriage sent his inheritance to a different branch of the Fordyce family. I did not ask if others were younger, richer, or handsomer—I loved *him*; and I was proud of his loving me. I say this to you,” continued she more calmly, after a pause of some moments, “lest you should think it impossible—as many girls do—to make a happy marriage without being in love. My marriage was a happy one, Eleanor.”

But Eleanor only sighed heavily.

Nevertheless, it was necessary to come to

some decision : it was necessary to answer Sir Stephen's letter. Eleanor sent for Godfrey the next day, and told him she consented.

"But warn Sir Stephen Penrhyn," said she after a few hurried sentences of explanation, "as he hopes to marry me—as he expects me to prefer this marriage for my mother's sake, never to mention my guardian—"

"Your *guardian* !" said Godfrey, with withering contempt.

"Never to mention Mr. Stuart," repeated Eleanor with pale lips, but haughty firmness, "at all to me : least of all in the terms used in his letter. Abuse of the dead cannot serve my mother, and it is a needless addition to my pain."

Godfrey sate down to write at once. He wrote angrily and rapidly ; he said precisely what Eleanor bid him ; and he pushed the sheet of paper across the table, as if sullenly

submitting it for her approval. But one of those chance associations of which Byron speaks as—

“ Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound,”

smote Eleanor’s heart.

The sound of Godfrey’s pen hurriedly passing over the paper, reminded her of the fever through which David Stuart had nursed her when a child : when she heard him writing—conscious, but too weak to do more than lie listening.

All returned :—the pale anxious face ; the heavy, tender eyes, that had watched so many nights for her sake ; the sound of his voice in prayer ; the cherishing touch of his hand, enfolding hers while he prayed ; all the daily, hourly, habitual tenderness of that poor wretch who had rushed uncalled to meet his God ; who was dead, disgraced ; whose face she might never see again, in that blank, sick world

where others were wooing her ; and suddenly overwhelmed her. She rose, as Godfrey put the letter before her ; she tossed her clasped hands above her head with a despairing wail ; and dropping down again in her chair, she sobbed as though her heart would break.

Godfrey looked at her with more than usual displeasure.

“ Don’t be so like an actress, for Heaven’s sake !” said he.

This was a favourite phrase with Godfrey ; as it is with many persons of impassive manners. It never seems to strike them that the actress copies nature—nature, it may be, in her exaggerated moments, but nature still. The stride of the savage, the gesticulation of the Frenchman, are foreign to us, but natural to them. I have heard and smiled at the observation, “ What a beautiful moonlight ! it is like a scene on the stage !” Was the moonlight less real for the comparison ?

But these were reflections Godfrey never made. He knew that he could submit to be shot, hung at the yard-arm, or follow the funeral of his wife and children, without the moving of a muscle, or the quivering of an eyelash. That being *his* manner of enduring grief or pain, it appeared to him the model manner. He could not conceive of, or admit any other. All his lines of admiration and esteem, concentrated in the perspective point of self.

CHAPTER II.

ELEANOR'S BRIDEGROOM.

SIR STEPHEN PENRHYN'S arrival at Aspendale, as Miss Raymond's accepted suitor, brought a certain degree of cheerfulness to all but the object of his suit. Lady Raymond saw him with curiosity, and a sort of complacent triumph. Her pretty daughter's conquest! her son-in-law that was to be! She also admired him; as she admired Godfrey; and wondered Eleanor was not prouder of him, for many were Sir Stephen's stories of bets won by marvellous feats of swim-

ming, such as none ever performed but Byron and Leander ; of pistol-shots at a shilling held between his finger and thumb ; of steeple-chases, and leaps, that made the listener gape with wonder both at the horse and his rider, and sometimes secretly question the exactitude of the anecdotes told.

Godfrey received him with more cordiality than he had yet shown to any acquaintance ; they talked together of David Stuart's unprincipled and dastardly conduct. Lady Margaret had always been kind to Eleanor's admirer ; and some of the old smiles came back, while she welcomed and congratulated him.

At first, there was some disposition, on the parts of all, to soothe him by excuses for Eleanor's utter dejection and shyness ; to reason with him on the allowance to be made for her, seeing the great horror that had occurred, and that she had been brought up from childhood by the man who had de-

stroyed himself. They were all afraid Sir Stephen's feelings might be wounded; but they might have spared themselves the anxiety.

Perhaps no better explanation can be given of the nature of Sir Stephen's attachment, than the fact, that it was a secondary consideration with him whether Eleanor seemed "in love" or not, so long as she accepted him. Let the marriage take place; that was the boundary of his requisition. If Stuart had died on the gallows—if he had died on the rack—what was that to Sir Stephen? The event, as he truly said, made no change in his sentiments. Her fortune was gone: very well; his was not; he had still eighteen thousand a-year and his prospects. Give her to him. Don't make circumstances seem obstacles that were in fact facilities. Give him this beggared beauty: he wanted her, not her fortune. Give her to him, there,



now ; under what conditions they pleased ; settlements, or no settlements ; debts, or no debts ; love, or no love. Of course, he would be glad to inspire her with affection, if he could ; but if not, still let her be his—his, dressed like other brides, in smiles and blushes, or choked in sobs and mourning :—His at all hazards ! His passion for her was as a bird of prey, swooping down to seize her in its talons. Hope, tenderness, courtship, delay, were as little present in his thoughts, as in the hawk that sweeps its circle and drops through the air. Life was a restless fever, till the preparations for his marriage were completed ; all signed and settled ; the journey to Edinburgh made ; the wedding over ; and that pale wonder of the world his by every law human and divine ; his, so that he would have the right to smite and slay any man who attempted to wrench her from him.

There are women who think it sublime to be loved with this sort of passion ; who

are proud of inspiring it. The sublime of sensuality! It is a love, which when the sum is cast up and the loss and gain balanced, can be effaced as easily as the figures on a child's slate. It is a love, which retains no memory of the past and gives no hold over the future. Many a poor village girl has lived to learn its worth; and marvelled in the simple-heartedness of her despair, how it was that tears and prayers failed to move one who seemed so ready to lay down life for her smile; how it was that the same man who was well nigh shooting himself for her sake, could almost see her drown herself with indifference. "He loved me once—how can he be so hard with me now?" Poor little sorrowful fool, he never loved you; he loved himself. Love is pitiful, and prone to sacrifice. Look back, and see who made those sacrifices. You did. Now, dig for pity in that sterile heart, and find the soil,—hot sand!



Meanwhile, Sir Stephen did his best, after his own method, to please and conciliate every one round him. He showered gifts on Emma's little children; he would have bestowed toys of solid gold, if they had desired them. He ordered all Lady Raymond's Indian shawls, trinkets, knick-knacks, and treasures, to be bought in at the sale at any price they were bid up to. The servants thought they had never seen such a generous-hearted gentleman in their lives. All the morning he went about with the lady's-maid, making lists of things which the woman knew or imagined her mistress would be loath to lose; and all the evening he sate and contemplated Eleanor—Eleanor dressed in the pretty, gay, light colours Margaret had chosen for her season in town. For the death of the man she loved, his dreadful death, did not give her any right to wear mourning. He was no relation. That poor sinner, of whom no one

spoke, now that the first burst of inquiry, execration and blame was over, was nothing to those he had loved, and served, and ruined—nothing to Eleanor!

And so she sate, in her bright shot-silks, working at the gay curtain border of crimson and white roses, which she had worked at all the summer; looking up with vague, frightened eyes at Sir Stephen when he spoke; trying to collect the sense of what he said, in her wandering brain; trying to like him, and feel grateful to him, because he would not allow her mother's things to be disturbed or sold; and because he was to be her husband, and it was shocking to feel the horror of him that she did, from the terrible associations connected with his letter of proposals. Poor Eleanor! she strove hard; and Margaret's tender smile, from time to time silently, encouraged her, in her attempts to converse with the man whose presence was to replace for life that dear vision of a

perpetuated companionship, lost to her for ever !

Once only, in the petty every-day incidents that are all so marked in the first hour of affliction, all courage and self-command forsook her. Sir Stephen proposed that she should take a ride with him. It would do her good to ride. Margaret looked out at the calm autumn day, and thought so too. Eleanor came down equipped to the portico, where Sir Stephen was already waiting for her. The groom was leading the horses up and down before the door. Eleanor stood still, and shuddered. David Stuart's horse and her own were there. Nothing could be more natural : the riding-horses being ordered, the ordinary mechanical routine of service was performed : little the whistling groom cared who rode the sleek animal committed to his charge : he adjusted the stirrups and reins.

" Shall I assist you ?" said Sir Stephen.

"Thank you ; the groom ;" said Eleanor faintly.

Still she stood, breathing heavily, and looking around. There was Margaret, waiting to see them mount, as formerly ; her sweet face paler than Eleanor had yet seen it, but with a smile—a loving, pitying smile. There were the horses ; *his* horse, that was fed from Margaret's basket of roses on that day marked out from other usual days only by a secret remembrance. But where was he ?

David Stuart was dead ; drowned in the roaring Linn. He would ride no more with Eleanor ; nor walk, nor read, nor speak, nor smile ; the cold autumn wind blew over the restless waterfall, whose murmur seemed to sound in her ear ; the wistful pleading glance of his eyes rose to her memory ; sunshine, and trees, and paths, and hills, where they had rode together, pressed confusedly on her brain ; the marble

pillars of the portico, against which Margaret leaned with golden-braided hair, flickered with strange shadows, and reeled and shook unsteadily in her sight.

"Oh! I cannot — I cannot," muttered the poor girl; and in attempting to move back to that gentle friend, she lost consciousness, and sank fainting in Sir Stephen's arms.

In his arms! that shy stately queen of his fancy, who was distant to him as a picture or a dream. A fierce fear thrilled his heart that he yet might lose her; that death might rob him of his promised bride; and as he strained her convulsively to his breast, he himself turned ghastly pale.

"She is not recovered enough to ride yet; she has been so unwell lately," said Lady Margaret. "Let me take off her hat and veil; let me attend to her; you will stifle her," added she, with an amazed impatient effort to release Eleanor.

But she moved him no more than if it had

been a statue of force holding a broken lily. Still he held her ; fast ; till a gasping sigh told of returning life, and the mournful eyes re-opened and fixed themselves on his face.

The accidents of physical preference and physical disgust are beyond our ken, and depend perhaps more than we are ourselves aware, on slight threads of association woven in the web of memory.

When Eleanor recovered consciousness the grasp that held her was the first idea that presented itself. Inexplicably, the day recurred when first she saw Sir Stephen, the dreadful strength of his arm, lashing poor Ruellach. Inexplicably also, the gentle touch of David Stuart's hand, assisting her to dismount, or arranging the reins in her first riding lessons. She felt, she knew not why, a sort of horror of that strength of which Sir Stephen was so proud. There was something terrible and repulsive to her in the savage fondness of his locked embrace—

in the wild eagerness of his anxious eyes. It was with a sick shudder that she turned from him, and placed her hand in Margaret's.

"I have been so ill; I do not feel equal to riding," was all she said; and for a moment, the bride and bridegroom, so strangely betrothed, looked wistfully at each other. Then Eleanor's glance dropped. The horses were being led back to the stable, and her gaze sadly followed them. They were to be sold in a few days; so much the better. Let everything be swept away that bore traces of the past.

She was glad that her marriage was to take place in Edinburgh, and not at Aspendale: not in that quiet village church, where her dream had been to stand as the wedded wife of David Stuart, and hear the marriage blessing from the lips of her earliest and dearest friend, old Mr. Fordyce. She was glad that all was to be so strange and new

round her, that it would seem rather as if she were transported into another more dreary world, than continuing her struggle in this. Only Ruellach, and Stuart's servant Sandy, remained as links to the old happy times. The latter had pleaded hard to be allowed to remain in the service of the family. He had been with Sir John many years, and had followed David to England. Old, quaint, and nearly useless as he seemed, Sir Stephen showed considerable reluctance in granting the petition in his favour, even when urged by Eleanor.

"He thought, perhaps, you would let him keep one of the lodges; he knows the place," said she.

"What lodge? Who has been talking of the place? Who has been talking of the lodge?" said Sir Stephen; with a glance of such sudden anger at the man, as startled and astonished Eleanor.

"'Deed, then, Sir Stephen, I'm frae the

Duke o' Lanark's pairt o' the country—ye ken that's no far off; but if I'll no hae the lodge, put me whar ye wull. I'd like weel eneugh to be under-gairdener. I'm rare at sortin' seeds, and makin' cane-work for ladies' bowers—her Leddyship kens I did muckle o' that in India; and I'm rare at makin' flies for fushin'; there's no a fush in the lake but I'll find a fly for him. I'm gude at a hunder things. Just tak me as odd han', and try me. I'm thinkin' ye'll find me of mair use than ye'd weel believe."

"You are to take him as *odd man*, Sir Stephen," said Eleanor, with the nearest approach to a smile Sir Stephen had yet seen on her sad face. He looked at her upward-pleading eyes, and longed to speak familiarly and gaily to her, as a bridegroom might; to say, "Well, thank me, and kiss me, and have it your own way." But to speak familiarly to Eleanor, was what Sir Stephen had yet to learn; and he therefore awkwardly

conceded, after a moment's hesitation, the favour she asked, and dismissed Sandy to his duties.

"Thank you very much," said Eleanor; and she held out her hand to him. He seized her hand eagerly; the passionate wish again beat in his heart, but as he looked on her pale cold cheek, fear again checked him. He leaned against the window where they were standing, and counted the days that would intervene before she was his wedded wife.

They passed, those days — swiftly they passed, to all but him. To the busy restless servants, who had more to do than twice that number of days seemed sufficient to enable them to accomplish; to Lady Raymond, who dreaded leaving the home she had inhabited before she was a widow; to poor Emma, who felt more frightened and forsaken every hour, as she contemplated the approach of the week she was to spend

without her husband, alone with her paralytic and speechless father, who seemed scarcely conscious of Eleanor's weeping farewell.

Godfrey was to accompany them as far as Edinburgh, and give his half-sister away. Lady Margaret, too, would go with them; and the Duke and Duchess of Lanark were to be present at the wedding, their little girls and Euphemia to be bridesmaids. It was the only compliment in their power on this occasion, and Sir Stephen was proud and gratified, and expected that it would be extremely gratifying also to his sister.

But he over-rated the placability of that remarkable lady. Outraged as she had originally been, on behalf of the whole body of noble Scotch women, at her brother's choice of an English girl, a mere nobody; "whose father was just a general, and her mother the Lord knows who;" there was yet the redeeming circumstance that the bride elect had a very large fortune. A sullen

welcome had dawned with that thought, and had been intended for the unwitting Eleanor.

But when the fact was made known of Miss Raymond's being literally and positively a beggar, the very clothes for her *trousseau*, (if she had one), paid for by the inveigled and deluded Sir Stephen; Lady Macfarren's wrath knew no bounds. She wrote a few scornful taunting lines at the last moment, saying that she presumed it would not be an over-gay wedding, after the "cheatery" that had been practised, and "the death of that sinful creature, Mr. Stuart;" that she doubted not both mother and daughter knew well enough the situation of affairs, long before that just catastrophe, and had cunningly drawn Sir Stephen on, till he could not retract; that the Earl of Peebles, their cousin, being then laid up in her house with an attack of gout, and other friends staying with her who she thought it would

be most especially awkward either to leave or to bring to the wedding, she had relinquished all intention of honouring the ceremony with her presence, and thought that the less that was said or done about it, in the eye of the Edinburgh folk, and the sooner her brother and his bride came away to Glencarrick, the better; for that they "could not conceal from themselves that it was altogether a shameful and contrairy business."

Sir Stephen reddened as he refolded this gracious epistle, and almost for the first time in his life, felt utter rebellion rise in his heart against the tyrannical government over his mind exercised by his portentous sister.

An excuse from the Earl of Peebles, in a style as kindly as the handwriting was crabbed, somewhat restored his composure. It was accompanied by a beautiful pearl necklace for the bride, and a jocose assurance that he sent it before he saw her, lest it should be supposed he intended any gallantry

afterwards ; as he expected to find her very pretty, and his gout was not in his eyes, which were always open to the charms of the fair.

Still, Sir Stephen felt comparatively little, the defection of the two principal members of his own family, and the attempt (not altogether unsuccessful) on his sister's part, to make him feel as though his marriage were a disgraceful one. He was too much "in love" to care. All things faded now into insignificance, that could neither advance nor retard his marriage.

Lady Macfarren would have been perfectly astounded at the carelessness with which her letter was thrust away, and the indifference felt to the absence even of the Earl of Peebles, when Lady Margaret came in to discuss with Sir Stephen the arrangements for the morrow.

For it was "the morrow" now : one day's light to die away, and the sun to rise again,

and Eleanor Raymond was Eleanor Penrhyn. Before that morrow's sun went down they would be man and wife—man and wife!

The last evening waned slowly away; Margaret spoke but little; her eyes rested fondly and frequently on Eleanor, and filled now and then with furtive tears. The Duchess of Lanark talked much of her own bridal days, and bridal dress; and her extreme youth and *naïveté* at that time, and of the jealousy her little dog had shown of the Duke; how, for many days, it always came whining to her dressing-room door, and could not understand that any one else should be there, but barked and flew at her husband. Such a wise little thing it was—a Scotch terrier; Scotch terriers were always more attached than other dogs, and cleverer—much cleverer. And while she prattled on, making little running commentaries on past nothings, Eleanor sate as in a trance, as one neither fearing nor hoping,

but locked in a lethargic dream. Only when they all rose to say good night, and Lady Raymond observed that she "looked pale and tired, though it was quite early," she glanced wildly round, with a terrified bewildered air, as though some one were missing, or some shadowy spectre had flitted past,—and shrank trembling to her mother's side.

So the day came: and the hour. The solemn vow was spoken; the golden ring circled her finger; the embrace of mother, brother, and friends, congratulated the bride; the carriages drew up that were to convey Lady Raymond and her maid, and "the happy pair" to Glencarrick; and as Eleanor leaned back, too faint to do more than set her foot on the carriage step; she felt her husband's arm, supporting—almost lifting her in—eager and strong, as on the day he lashed Ruellach!



CHAPTER III.

A BRIDAL VISIT.

THEY did not immediately go to Castle Penrhyn: Glencarrick was nearer: better shooting was to be had there, and from boyhood Sir Stephen had been accustomed to spend a couple of months at this time of the year with his sister. They were expected; and to Glencarrick they went.

It was late when they arrived, and the chill gloom of the autumn evening was suddenly exchanged for the warmth and light of a wood fire, by whose flickering upward blaze

Eleanor beheld with dazzled eyes, a very very tall bony woman standing on the rug, speaking rather loudly and jestingly with a little gouty smiling old man, ensconced in an old-fashioned arm-chair, that looked like a carved throne. The room, which was large and lofty, had a pleasant smell of pine-wood, the walls being of that material ; it looked cheerful and handsome by the flickering light, and at even distances the antlers of some king of the forest were nailed up as trophies of successful sport. The tall lady did not move from the spot where she was standing, but she looked towards the door as they entered, and extended both hands as Sir Stephen approached. She did not kiss her brother, but greeted him heartily, as a friendly man might have done, and her arms seemed as strong as his own, or stronger.

When Sir Stephen presented his bride, she stiffened her already erect figure, as if to reduce Eleanor to the proper level of insigni-

cance, and then made a haughty, almost imperceptible inclination of the head. The Earl of Peebles claimed a less ceremonious introduction, and rising from his carved and cushioned throne, kissed her on both cheeks, chuckling as he did so, and assuring her that he had in his time kissed a good many brides, but none that he felt such an interest in, and that if she were a good girl and loved Sir Stephen, he would not endanger her future prospects of becoming Countess of Peebles by marrying and presenting a bride, and a family of his own; though such things had been, when heirs thought themselves most sure of their inheritance. After which, softly patting her hand, he subsided into the carved throne, and looked smilingly at the fire. Lady Macfarren eyed Eleanor from head to foot.

“ Well, you seem tired enough, and pale enough,” said she gruffly, making a sort of gesture as if motioning her to stand nearer the warm blaze.

"I am not much tired," said Eleanor, "and I am always pale."

"Humph ! my brother wrote us word that you were a great beauty, that's all. I suppose London hours, and fine lady ways——"

"I have been very little in London."

"Humph ! how old are you ?"

"I am seventeen."

"You look much older ; I should think now you're safely married, you could have no objection to tell your real age."

"I was seventeen last August," said Eleanor, in rather a proud tone, though she struggled with her tears, not at the extraordinary and inhospitable reception granted her, but at the sudden recollection of her birthday, in all the quiet and happiness of Aspendale, before fatal events had broken up that dear home. She sate down, and patted Ruellach's head, as he had stretched himself without ceremony on the rug.

"That's a largish dog for the drawing-room, Leddy Penrhyn."

"It shall not come in, if you dislike it. Is this the drawing-room?"

"Ay, is it. Did you think it was the kitchen?" said Lady Macfarren, with a sneer.

Sir Stephen felt irritated; but habitual submission to his sister subdued his tone, as he observed, that a highland shooting lodge was so different to what Eleanor had ever seen, that she might stand excused for her question.

"But I think the room quite beautiful," said Eleanor gently; "and I think the smell of the fir-wood the pleasantest thing in the world."

"We'll make a highland lass of you in no time," said the delighted Lord Peebles, reaching out his hand again to pat hers, while her sister-in-law moved away, much like a dog

that has been ordered not to spring on a wayfarer.

Lady Raymond, whose carriage had followed at some little distance, was now announced, and Sir Stephen led her forward and presented her by name.

Lady Macfarren's reception was one degree more freezing, if possible, than that bestowed on Eleanor.

Lady Raymond was much fatigued, very delicate, and accustomed to be greatly caressed, and gently dealt with; she therefore nervously responded to the questions put to her by her extraordinary hostess, and burst into tears.

"What's the matter now?" said Lady Macfarren.

"My dearest mother!" exclaimed Eleanor.

"I don't know," sobbed Lady Raymond, "but it's all so strange."

"Humph! well, it can't be stranger to you than it is to me, that's one comfort:

and now we'll all go to our rooms, for it's late."

"I hope," said Sir Stephen to his wife, as he left her to dress for dinner, "that your mother will avoid offending my sister in any way."

The look of unrestrained amazement with which this speech was met, confused and irritated Sir Stephen.

"I mean," said he, impatiently, "that I hope they will get on as well as they can together. My sister, you see, is a woman of very superior mind, and she has always held a most important position in our family; indeed I may say that Lord Peebles himself would hardly do anything without consulting her; and she is rather proud; and my marriage has not altogether,—in fact circumstances,—you see I don't like to vex you by stating all my reasons, but I think we should do better, you know, if you and your mother knocked under a little."

"Knocked under a little!" Eleanor mused upon the words, and looked doubtfully at her husband, as if seeking further information.

"My sister can be kind enough when she chooses," said he, "but she don't choose to be braved."

"Braved!"

"D—n it, she don't like people to be too independent, you know; when—when they can't be independent, you know. If this could all be understood at once, I'm sure we should get on very comfortably; and if it ain't, I know enough of Janet to know that we shan't, that's all."

"I suppose Lady Macfarren will not be offended without good reason?" said Eleanor, after a pause.

"Well, of course she'll have reasons—reasons of her own, you know; but she's proud, as I told you. Now, I thought your way of answering her about your age, rather—rather short, as if you were offended."

"I was not offended. I was surprised ; because she did not seem to believe me, and because such questions are not asked on a first introduction."

"Well, but you know she must judge what questions she'll ask, and she likes to be answered carefully and considerately ; in fact, she's always offended if she's not answered in that way."

Especially, thought Eleanor, by people who can't be independent. The phrase and the hesitating tone in which it was spoken, lingered in her heart. She felt all its meaning. Yes, she and her mother were beggars —beggars rescued from beggary by this rich man, because he had fallen in love with Eleanor, and married her. Having married her, ought he not to cherish and protect her, whether his sister liked the marriage or not ? Was it all right, and natural, and a matter of course, that he should warn her not to offend, instead of warding off offence from

her? Was this husband's love? The long tresses of her hair were braided by the poor Ayah, in the most complicated and graceful plaits, before Eleanor had resolved this question. She sate before the mirror, but she did not see the reflection of her own sad face; she was trying darkly to see into her future.

"Do you not like it, my lady?"

"Like what?" said Eleanor.

"The plaiting of your hair." Eleanor kissed the poor Ayah, who had been her nurse when a child, and said with a sigh:

"It is very pretty, but I was thinking of something else."

When the party assembled for dinner, several more introductions took place; none of which seemed to possess any interest; till, at one of the new names, Eleanor positively started.

"Leddy Penrhyn, Mrs. Christison, of

Dunleath, and Miss Christison, desire to make acquaintance with ye."

Mrs. Christison, of Dunleath! the widow of the writer who had bought Mr. Stuart's property; the person with whom David had treated for the possession of the home of her ancestors! Eleanor strove to speak, but her words were inarticulate. She looked at the old lady and her daughter. Over the features of the latter, who was a fat bold-looking spinster with a profusion of fair curls and hard keen eyes, flashed a gleam of curiosity so vivid, that it had the effect of recalling Eleanor to herself. Over the somewhat plaintive countenance of her sober little mother, there stole an equally evident degree of compassion. "Ye're quite strange here, yet, Leddy Penrhyn," was all the old lady said, but in the tone there was sympathy. Miss Tabitha Christison eyed the young bride rather scornfully. Tabitha (or Tib, as her mother and friends called her),

was not fond of young, pretty people ; and it was rumoured besides, that she had herself aspired to the position Eleanor occupied as Sir Stephen's wife. Matrimony had never been absent from Tib's thoughts since she was sixteen, and she was now five-and-forty. She shifted her cards, but she played them still ; patiently and dauntlessly, whenever there was an opportunity. Not that Tib had been without wooers, for she had been a comely " sonsie lassie," and might be rich, if her mother divided what she had to leave between her and her brother. But those that wooed her she would not marry, and those she desired to marry would not woo. So it came to pass that Tib was an old maid.

Now, of old maids there are many kinds. Cuvier himself could scarcely have classed the multitude of the species. The patient pious old maid ; the brisk busy old maid ; the gaunt, the precise, the dressy, the grim, the gossiping, the spiteful, the kindly ; all

these, buzzing in and out of the world's great hive, may puzzle us by their variety. But one great distinction they share with the rest of their fellow-creatures, married or single: there are bad and good old maids. One species, gentle, meek, useful; having no ties of their own, making ties of the very tenderness and affection of their yearning hearts; nursing sick children; looking after the poor; taking all the trouble off the hands of some overburdened mother of a family; governess, friend, housekeeper, and humble companion, all in one; women perfect in their way; women who lack nothing of being saints, except canonization.

But to balance the love we might otherwise feel for the lonely race, there is another species: busy-bodies; intriguers, thrusting themselves out of their own solitary homes into the homes of others, to work mischief, like earwigs in the core of fruit; toad-eaters; slanderers; full of flattery; full of spite; struggling to keep their ground by the

meanest concessions ; affecting not to perceive the most open rebuffs ; ready to undermine by the grossest treachery ; envious ; pitiless ; daughters of the father of lies, and serving him perpetually.

Tib Christison belonged to the latter class. Many a home had rued her presence ; but she had her welcome yet, where she was not found out. She had her welcome at Glencarrick, and well she kept her ground. Lady Macfarren spoke of Tib as a “good, useful body.” Tib was never out of sorts, or out of temper with her ; though she might be heard rating her poor old mother in their private room. Tib played Scotch reels for an indefinite length of time, or danced them, according as was needed. Tib had receipts infallible for gout and rheumatism ; Tib knew how game could be preserved for the longest possible period ; and where the finest Shetland spinning could be done, at the cheapest possible rate. If a multi-

plicity of tiresome commissions had to be executed, Tib was charged with them when she went to Edinburgh. If a "wearyfu' " guest had to be entertained, Tib was the uncomplaining sacrifice ; if more guests came than the house conveniently held, Tib gave up her room for a garret.

Tib appeared, indeed, to be continually practising the most laborious self-denial ; but Tib knew what she was about. For the last three years, or more, a visionary coronet floated before her eyes. The service she seemed to give to all, was in truth offered only at the shrine of that kind little Dagon on the carved throne, who had promised Eleanor not to cut out Sir Stephen, by becoming a husband and father. The Earl of Peebles (or as old Mrs. Christison always called him, "the Airle") was Tib's mark. For the sake of a footing in Penrhyn Castle and Glencarrick, Tib bore all insolence and all trouble. For the sake of its neighbourhood to Penrhyn Castle, lone and lovely

Dunleath had been still retained, when its owner most desired to part with it. Tib's progress was slow and uncertain, but it was progress. Year after year her courtship of the little Dagon went silently on. She wooed him with knitted flannels, and caressed him with rheumatic embrocations. He could not do without her. She was wary of landing her fish, but she felt he was hooked. Feebler and less capable of resistance he became day by day, as she wound the strong line of determination round the creel of her will. And all this time Lady Macfarren was blind, (as people very often are on these great occasions) blind, from the very audacity of the scheme concocted under her eyes. The notion of such wild ambition on the part of that good useful body the writer's daughter, as her marrying the Airle, the head of their illustriously obscure house, never once occurred to her.

"Amuse Lord Peebles, Tib ; I'm going out."—"Give your arm to Lord Peebles, for a turn in the garden, Tib ; he's a little lame to-day."

And good useful Tib obeyed with compassionate alacrity.

Nor was Lord Peebles himself clearer sighted : the Airle had been an ambassador ; but Tib was the shrewder diplomatist of the two. .

Eleanor, however, was not as blind as Lady Macfarren. To her amazed eyes it immediately appeared that some odd sort of courtship was going on ; a courtship *à l'envers*," since in this instance the lady was the wooer.

After dinner had been lingered through, and a somewhat tipsy company of gentlemen assembled, Scotch reels were the order of the night. Apparently the fit of gout that had prevented Lord Peebles from attending Eleanor's marriage, must have been very slight ; for, from a spectator, he became an

actor in the busy scene. He danced: he cried "Hech!" he snapped his fingers with feeble jauntiness; making roguish faces, now at Eleanor, and now at Tib. Tib neutralised these attempts at familiarity, by demure and majestic glances; but she danced with an activity which perfectly astounded her young sister-in-law, who felt, while her partner set to her and cut the figure of the 'reel, as though she beheld a very large lamp, with a little white moth flitting round it.

While they were resting from the dance, some remarks were made on the various persons who composed the company; and Lord Peebles, looking at a gaunt red-haired individual in a kilt, who had been very attentive to Tib, said:

"That's your brother Christison's partner, Mr. Malcolm, Miss Tib; ain't it? What does he wear the kilt for? I hear he's one of your suitors, and I am sorry to hear it, for the youth's just like the ghost of Rob Roy."

"Oh! but you're a droll man, Lord Peebles; I vow ye make me laugh with thae comparisons. The ghost o' Rob Roy! Deed then it's a fact, that Nature was ow'r scrimping in makin' him; she hadna stuff to spare. But I'm no for a ghost I can tell ye, nor for a penniless writer's son neither, which young Mr. Malcolm is; and I'm thinking his suit 'ill be ill-suited, if he maks it to me. The ghost o' Rob Roy! did one ever hear the like? I declare I'll be afraid for ye, if ye're so sateerical, tho' we're old friends. The ghost of Rob Roy, eh?"

Tib laughed so much, and so heartily, she seemed so entertained, that evidently she contrived to bewilder the Airle into thinking he had said something very amusing. He laughed and rubbed his little hands, and looked with glee at the unconscious Highlander who was the subject of their remarks. But while, for the twentieth time, Tib giggled over Lord Peebles' jest, she suddenly caught Eleanor's

eye; its expression displeased her, for in it Tib thought she read contempt and repugnance; and perhaps she was right. And she treasured the memory of that look, for Tib was a great hoarder-up of small slights; being convinced of her own value, and that sooner or later the day would come when she could repay them. Once again, in the course of the evening, the expression of poor Eleanor's face was distasteful to her; Lord Peebles was complimenting his new relation on her beauty.

“ My *certie*, (as Mrs. Christison says), if we'd met when you were single and I was for marrying, I know some young ladies who'd have been hard run; you're a sweet lily blossom, and I envy my cousin Stephen, I can tell you.”

Eleanor smiled at the old man, while he chuckled over this speech; her smile had neither mockery nor merriment in it, but a sort of calm gentle compassion, and it displeased Tib.

When Tib went to bed that night, she felt that she hated young Lady Penryhn ; she thought with vague fierceness of the new-comer ; and she twisted her hair into its multifarious curl-papers, with such hard final pinches, that she must have dreamed she had the bride in her fingers. Poor Eleanor ! as she murmured the words in her evening prayer, " Deliver us from evil," she little knew that two rooms off, the fat old maid was closing her hard keen eyes, her bitter and irreconcilable foe.

CHAPTER IV.

HOSPITALITY AT GLENCARRICK.

Yes, Tib Christison hated Eleanor, undeserved as her hatred might seem. If we were only disliked for the real and voluntary offence we give, what a holiday world this would be !

But some hearts are so full of gall, that they brim over, and the drops fall on their fellow-creatures as they pass. Some dislike from hearsay ; some for a chance look or word misinterpreted ; some for very envy of natural advantages, which they

neither earned nor can surrender, but carry about with them a stamp set upon them by God : of far less importance, perhaps, in their own eyes, than in the eyes of those who grudge those advantages ; for they have tested their value by possession, and know how, in His supreme justice, all such inequalities are balanced. The poor see the rich go by in carriages, and think that wealth must be happiness ; the rich know that it is not so.

But we will not affirm that Eleanor gave no offence ; that of course must depend on what is considered an offence. With Tib, to be young, handsome, and a bride, was to offend. With Lady Macfarren, not “to knock under,” as Sir Stephen had elegantly phrased it, was to offend.

Eleanor was very gentle, but she had a sort of calm superiority of manner, intolerable to her bony and stalwart sister-in-law. The latter had expected to rule a shame-

stricken, dejected, and trembling beggar; in love with her brother; a mere school-girl in age; frightened and anxious. When she saw the bride, her very soul was disquieted and astonished, by the tranquil dignity of her deportment, and the look of thought in her steady serious eyes; nor was she without a certain feminine instinct that told her at once Eleanor did not love Sir Stephen. It increased the suspicions she had conceived, that the coming crash of her large fortune was known to the widow and daughters before they accepted him. She saw in them, two subtle schemers, whose plans for worldly rescue from difficulties had amply succeeded. Was it possible to lose so much money, and be so quiet about it, if it had not been a thing foreseen and foreknown?

True, Stuart had drowned himself, to avoid disgrace and exposure; but that proved nothing as regarded Lady Raymond and her daughter. Money! How dare she take so coolly the

fact of her having no money, after having passed as a great heiress? How dare she behave in all respects as she would have done if she had married him in the pride and pomp and glory of having five thousand a-year?

And she was not in love with him! If Lady Macfarren loved anything, in her hard cold narrow heart, it was her half-brother. True, she had worked like a mole with her doting old father, to get portions of the unentailed property settled on herself, to the prejudice of Sir Stephen; but that was because she loved money better than all. Next to money, she loved Sir Stephen; better perhaps as the head of the family, the means of reflected consequence, the chief object of importance in her life, than as her brother, but she loved him; and it was with bitter resentment that she thought of his being entrapped and deluded by this pale-faced, Indian-born, delicate-looking girl; slight and stately as a reed in flower; proud as a queen,

and poor as a shepherdess. He who might, in Lady Macfarren's opinion, have been considered a good match for a Duke's daughter, and have been adored into the bargain.

The treatment, therefore, of the young bride, by Lady Macfarren and Miss Christison partook of those three varieties of conduct which an old-fashioned historian informs us were practised by the fashionable ladies of the Court of Queen Elizabeth in their intercourse with each other; namely, "the privy nip," the "fleering frump," and the "open flout;" all of which methods I have also seen practised by the ladies of the Court of Queen Victoria; the "privy nip" being, I think, most in vogue among young ladies, (who are obliged, in their little animosities, to keep up a semblance of friendship and civility;) the "fleering frump," among young married women jealous of each other; and the "open flout," unquestionably the line of

the more magnificent ladies, great Marchionesses, and patronesses of Almack's.

That Eleanor suffered, under this reign of covert hostilities, was not to be doubted; but she did not complain, and showed neither resentment nor resistance. Indeed, she was the most provoking person to offend, in the world, for she never appeared to comprehend that the offence was wilful. Her reserve and her repugnance visibly increased, but she was calm and polite; she did not behave as though any peculiar aggression against herself were going on, but as if she thought she was living among disagreeable people; and her mode of taking these battering assaults confounded and maddened Lady Macfarren.

It was always some petty annoyance that was practised. Those who know life, know that petty annoyances are sometimes more difficult to bear than more important misfortunes, for which we prepare the courage of our souls, and which we have high and

holy motives for endeavouring to sustain. Petty was the warfare; petty the suffering; and petty the triumph; the resistance *nil*. Once it was a question whether Lady Raymond should not have a sofa placed in her bed-room. Mrs. Christison of Dunleath had the good-nature to observe, and the hardihood to mention this desideratum, having found Lady Raymond climbing up to rest on the huge damask-curtained bed in the middle of the day.

“A sofa! what would she want with a sofa?” exclaimed Lady Macfarren. “If folks are well, let them sit up; and if they’re sick, let them undress, go to bed, and send for the doctor: that’s *my* maxim. Rare fine-lady doings! if every woman in the house were to be crouched up in her bed-room on a sofa, like a hare in its form. Is anything the matter? If there is, send for Dr. McNab. If there ain’t, don’t talk nonsense about sofas. There’s one in the

drawing-room, and she's welcome to lie there, if she likes."

On another occasion, a prodigious altercation (or rather monologue, since the loud angry voice of Lady Macfarren was only responded to by a chorus of low sobs) took place in the corridor of an upper story where the servants slept, which the hostess was visiting on a police inspection to see that all was right. The Ayah was crouched on the ground, weeping and terrified. Lady Macfarren was pointing sternly to the place where she sat. She said she "would not have it—would not allow it."

"Out with all those pots and pans ! I never saw such heathen nonsense in all my life ! If the creature can't eat plain wholesome food like the rest of the servants, she's welcome to starve, for me, till she's learned better. Take them away—take them all away—and let me hear no more of it."

Then Eleanor comprehended the cause of

the tumult : the Ayah was a Hindoo, and as one of the tenets of their religion is not to eat in vessels that have been used by those who profess a different faith, she had always cooked her little rice messes in the "pots and pans" now so unceremoniously carried off. Eleanor looked compassionately down on her nurse.

"Never mind ; I will buy you others, Maya ; you shall have new ones," said she.

Fierce and scornful was the laugh, with which Lady Macfarren greeted this interference.

"You'll buy others ? Truly, Lady Penrhyn, you're over young for the management of other people's households. You'll buy others—and pay for them out of *that*, I suppose," and she pointed to the necklace of gold coins which the Hindoo woman wore.

Eleanor did not answer ; no one could have guessed if she heard the taunt ; she still bent over her nurse, and spoke to her ; using

Indian terms of endearment she had learned as a child ; and when the little Hindoo rose and went back to her room, she went with her, passing through the group of servants and mistress and Tib, as though instead of living people they had been the boughs of trees in a storm.

To *humble* Eleanor, was Lady Macfarren's constant endeavour, and Eleanor could not be humbled. She was not afraid of loud words ; she was not ashamed of her poverty ; she would not understand the meaning of half the taunts that were addressed to her. But one weak point became apparent. The sudden glance at Lady Raymond, when some coarser sneer than usual seemed to include *her* in the systematic warfare, showed that any insult or tormenting speech which might wound her mother, was dreaded by Eleanor. She was, to repeat the elegant expression triumphantly used by Tib, in discussing this matter with Lady Macfarren, " as thin-skinned as a rabbit,"

when Lady Raymond was a sufferer; and though Lady Raymond had often comforted herself as to the impossibility of some of the gross speeches being intentional, and innocently observed that "the worst of living among vulgar people, was that they had no tact, and were always saying just the wrong things,"—yet there were occasions when it was impossible to doubt the design to insult. Once indeed, Lady Raymond, who was a person of weak nerves, and little self-command, was so stung by what was said, that she burst in tears, and exclaimed to her daughter, "I wonder you will allow them to speak to me in that way,"—and it was with a thrill of mingled exultation and embarrassment, that the gaunt sister-in-law met Eleanor's indignant reproach:

"What have we ever done to you, that you should behave as you do, Lady Macfarren?"

She had touched her at last; she had found

the way to wound ; that was satisfactory, and the power was not sparingly used.

What had she done? Ay, what? It is a question many a bride might ask, and many a family find difficult to answer : all for want of a little of that mutual indulgence which Lady Margaret Fordyce preached and practised.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE UNDER A NEW ASPECT.

SIR STEPHEN was angry that things did not "go smoothly," as he expressed it; but he was not grieved; and he was extremely disposed to repent having brought Lady Raymond with her daughter, and not having dispatched her, at once, with Sandy, "the odd man," to Penrhyn Castle. Eleanor most ardently desired to leave Glencarrick; but how say to her husband, "Your sister is so disagreeable that I hope you will soon go away?"

At length an opportunity offered of ascertaining what chance there was of such a desirable event. Lady Macfarren (aided and abetted by Tib) had made divers allusions to the increased expenditure of the household during the shooting season, and had freely discussed the cheating of her servants, the trouble of her accounts, and the enormous consumption in her house of lights and fuel, before Eleanor. The unquestioning silence of the young bride would have made it difficult to proceed farther, but for Tib's ingenuity. Tib was what is called "very blunt" in manner; she had such a reputation for "speaking her mind," that no one asked if a portion of her thoughts remained unspoken, or were precisely the reverse of what she spoke. It is a very common social illusion, that persons who have the ill-natured courage to say disagreeable things, full of pain and offence, are franker than their neighbours; that they

are frank because they are blunt. Tib was a proof of the exact contrary; for Tib was very blunt, and Tib was very sly. So Tib, knowing exactly what it was that Lady Macfarren desired to communicate, said with a little snorting laugh, in a blunt off-hand manner :

“I’d wager ye, now, Leddy Penrhyn, that ye know so little o’ housekeepin’ that ye’d not even be able to tell what addition each indiviedual maks in a faymily.”

“In what way?”

“In the week’s bills. Dear me, but ye answer varry innocently!”

“I should not have supposed one person, more or less, made much difference; but I don’t know.”

“Weel, it’s just charmin’ to hear your notions, Leddy Penrhyn; but I’m thinking Leddy Macfarren could tell ye a dufferent story. We were lookin’ at the bills this mornin’, and I obsairved that it was a wonder

to me that Leddy Raymond had not thought of some little arrangement for herself, by way of help, ye know."

Eleanor looked at Lady Macfarren. Lady Macfarren coloured, and tossed her head; but she answered quickly :

"Miss Christison means, that Lady Raymond might cast her contribution into the common purse."

"I thought—" said Eleanor; but the words "I thought we were here on a visit," choked her, and she paused.

"I know what you thought, but you're quite mistaken. My brother always paid his scot and lot when he came, and we'd our own agreement about it. At first, after my father died, and the place was mine, I thought just to make the exchange, and let him stay here three months, and I'd stay three months at Penrhyn Castle—though that would not have brought things even, for it's cheaper far to feed a woman than it

is to feed a man, with wine, and all that—but in the end we thought best to set a fair price; so much a month; so much as a bachelor; so much for a married couple; and tho' indeed I never expected a penniless bride, still less did I expect—”

Here, even Lady Macfarren paused, and the task devolved on Tib of completing the agreeable intimation that she had not expected a third party to arrive, to whom these pecuniary arrangements were utterly unknown, as they appeared to be to Lady Raymond.

“I am sure my mother will be very glad,” said Eleanor, “to contribute her share; we were not aware—Sir Stephen never mentioned to me—I am so ignorant in these matters.”

“Of course we look to him as regards yourself, Leddy Penrhyn, but not as regards yere mother, ye comprehend.”

She comprehended. Oh! rough life of dependence, unrolling like a withered scroll!

These people, these rich people, were bargaining then, among themselves, for the petty courtesies of life done by their inferiors every day with an ungrudging hospitality. Their guests were to pay for the bread they broke.

Eleanor resolved to ask her husband how long they were to stay at Glencarrick. She resolved more : she resolved to ask him to leave Glencarrick.

Her own home ; she had not seen it ; but she had a home ; she had married for that ; for the power and the happiness of preventing her mother from ever feeling the bitter change of circumstances caused by her guardian's fault. She had bartered herself, the whole future of her life, for the shelter of that home—where was it ? she would go there ; she would take her mother there ; to-morrow, if it might be so, if it could be so, she would go to Castle Penrhyn.

If it could be so ; but it could not. Sir Stephen listened, with gloomy irritation, to

his young wife's pleading. He replied that he always had stayed from two to three months at Glencarrick in the shooting season, and he had no notion of shortening his visit for any squabbling among the women. He had warned Eleanor to be very submissive to his sister, and if Lady Macfarren was offended or displeased, Eleanor and her mother must apologize. As to Lady Raymond being called upon to pay a certain portion of the housekeeping, he had not thought about it, but he was quite willing to pay her share, if Eleanor wished it; though he had understood from Lieutenant Marsden, that she had a sufficient independence from the legacy of Sir John Raymond which Godfrey had restored by deed. At all events, they must stay at Glencarrick the usual time, and make the best of it. He hoped he should hear no more of any disputes or misunderstandings; and he was sorry to say his sister had already complained

to him of the way in which Eleanor answered her. She thought Eleanor haughty : Eleanor must not be haughty. There would be no peace in families if those who ought to knock under, wanted to be uppermost ; and he would not encourage it, or he would have to settle disputes all day long. He was sure Godfrey would have advised quite a different line from what Eleanor was pursuing ; and, with a smothered oath, Sir Stephen left the room.

It was Eleanor's dressing-room ; she rose, and opened the window, and looked out over the blue lake, and purple hills with a feverish shudder ; wistfully—wildly—as though liberty lay somewhere beyond the boundary of earth. The day was warm and still ; it had that aromatic scent which loads the atmosphere in spots thickly planted with firs ; such as embalms the air to the traveller who has come through the wild pass of Glencoe, and rests among the ancient firs of the Black

Mount. Her eye wandered over the scenes that were present; and her heart wandered through the scenes of the past. This, then, was David Stuart's country; the land he loved; the land she had so thirsted to see for his sake; the land already familiar to her from many a sketch drawn by his hand. Oh! better to have died, than live to see it under such circumstances. Better to have died on his heart, when its loud beating choked her voice to silence, than live as the bride of another. Sir Stephen! how he coveted to marry her! How little he loved her! And her poor, gentle-hearted mother, who had never consciously said a word to pain living soul, how cruel not to protect her from harshness and insult! The young bride's eyes filled with angry tears, and her cheek flushed, as she leaned out of the casement, and gazed "over the hills, and far away."

There is picture by Van Holst at Lans-

downe House, which resembled Eleanor in that hour. In that picture (which represents Ginevra in Leigh Hunt's story, after her marriage, and while resolving on suicide), the artist has given a most marvellous delineation of woman's scorn, and woman's misery, mingled with something of the wild anxiety of a creature caught in a trap, in whom there lingers the dim instinct of a possible escape.

Old Mrs. Christison happened to be walking on the lawn ; she looked up and saw that young, pale, wrathful, despairing face ; and watched it for some moments with silent surprise. Mrs. Christison was a kindly woman, and she climbed the fir staircase, and came puffing into Eleanor's room.

" My dear," said she, as Eleanor turned her startled head, like a fawn caught in a brake, " I spied ye from below ; and I thoct I'd come up, and hae a word or

two with ye. Folk here, is camsteery folk, na doot; but the Deil himsel', they say, is nae sae bad as he's painted; and though Leddy Macfarren's a queer hard body, she's nae that ill to bide wi'."

Eleanor sighed.

She felt so lone that even Mrs. Christison's sympathy touched her; and she answered gently:

"I was thinking of my mother, Mrs. Christison, and that may have made me look grave."

"'Deed then Leddy Penrhyn, it's varry creditable to ye, anyhow, to be thinkin' of yere mother" (Tib rarely thought of her); "and it's just the thocht I've got in my mind, for I've been haeing a crack wi' Sandy and yon heathen Indian woman, and they've let me into Leddy Raymond's ways a little; and I'll do what I can to make her a wee bit mair comfortable. And ye'll no mak' a stranger o' me, for I'm just wae for ye to my heart's

core; and wow, but ye're story's a sad one! I knew a' thae Stuarts, and Mrs. Stuart was just a paragon o' women. My heart was lang sair for *her*, puir body! I'd walk away up from the hoose at Dunleath to the kirkyard, and look at her grave, and walk back again, wi' as little pleasure in the possession as might be. And a' they fine young creatures, her sons and daughters, to die off as they did! Ah! my dear, she'd a face as fair as an angel, and as muckle dignity as a crowned queen, and her brood were a' like her. And to my mind the bonniest o' them a' was just Davie; he had na his compare, puir laddie. And I mind weel his coming and pu'ing the weeds frae the place whar his mother used to sit in the sun, and I felt like a thief to hae Dunleath at a', and daredna come forrit (for he didna ken that I was there), but just went and grat within, and watchit him frae the window, till my gudeman cam' and flyt on me, for an auld fule. But ye're young, Leddy Penrhyn,

and life's a wheel ; and it'll maybe gie a good turn yet. The Lord kens what's best for us. Keep a gude heart, and a strong trust in His mercy ; and I'll do any little matter I can for Leddy Raymond, in the way o' comfortin', ye ken."

What Mrs. Christison did, or could do, would not have consoled Eleanor much ; her "comfortin'" consisting principally in bringing hot scones, delicate preserves, and fresh eggs, to Lady Raymond's room, and pressing her to eat these dainties long after the intolerably early breakfast hour had passed by ; putting a little stool of Berlin worsted-work under the feeble feet of the invalid ; and heaping fir-cones on the peat fire. But Lady Raymond was not like Eleanor, and she was so soothed by Mrs. Christison's gossiping and attentions, that when she heard the redoubtable Tib and her mother were going away, she actually la-

mented, saying that "in Mrs. Christison she lost the one person that made the place tolerable, and that she hoped they would come over from Dunleath to the Castle, and that she and Eleanor would go and see them at Dunleath." To all which Eleanor consented, with a sort of surprised sadness. 'The Airle' was invited, as a matter of course; and joked Eleanor by telling her he expected she would make his gruel, and warm his slippers. Lady Margaret was to come, when the Lanarks could spare her, and Godfrey and Emma, as soon as their first mourning was over: for Mr. Fordyce was dead—he had never rallied enough from the stroke of paralysis to speak coherently, and gradually sank till life departed.

It was an obscure life, passed in an obscure village; but not the less full of good deeds. The poor wept their gentle-hearted pastor; and Eleanor, as she lamented her

early friend, thought of the last day she saw him—the last indulgent wavering smile, when of all that he muttered and murmured, she could only make out that he spoke tenderly of her guilty guardian, as “poor David Stuart!”

CHAPTER VI.

ELEANOR'S NEW HOME.

THE radiant autumn sun shone fair and glorious, the day Eleanor left Glencarrick for Castle Penryhn. The lake lay like a sapphire, dropped from the crown of some 'Monarch of Mountains.' The silver birch, the scarlet-berried rowan tree, the stately pine, grouped in friendly neighbourhood with the changing foliage of the beech—passed like a dream of beauty before the eyes of the travellers. The bloom of the heather, spread out for miles and miles—the rush of the

tumbling turbid stream, whose banks were blocks of stone, whose shining pools seemed fathomless—the trickling burn that went down the hill-side singing to itself like a child at play—the difficult, toilsome, rough ascent, bringing at the summit a new world of hills and glens, to be passed through and succeeded by what seemed another world still—this moving panorama went on all day. At length the rich light began to fade; the crimson and purple hills dulled to the colour of cold iron; and the soft moon rose gently up, a little before the sunset glory was gone, as if waiting to comfort the earth when it should be utterly forsaken!

Eleanor had been almost joyous that day. The sense of deliverance from petty torment; the power of protection for her mother which the possession of a home of her own seemed to promise; the beauty of the scenery; the freshness of the mountain air; all combined to produce a feeling of exhilaration to which

her heart had been lately a stranger. She talked and smiled, as Sir Stephen would have given worlds to see her talk and smile a short time since ; but now he was gloomy and pre-occupied ; his sister had mingled with her farewell, whatever gall she could ; words of doubt, bitterness, and warning, rang in his ear ; and Eleanor's cheerfulness ran counter to his thought. Something of triumph and tyranny seemed to lurk in it : something of the spirit Lady Macfarren had affected to perceive in Eleanor's eyes that morning, of gladness to set out, as thinking that now the game was all her own. A dim belief in his sister's sneering assurances that he would find he had been " taken in ;" that the widow and her daughter knew well enough the crash that was coming, before he proposed ; rose and flickered in his mind like a meteor in a swamp, and he watched that lovely smile with sullen dissatisfaction.

For she was his, now ; his wife ; and the

man with passions and no affections, was already able to consider his choice more calmly. Beautiful he thought her, as a picture or a statue; and he thought of her with as much romance as the purchaser of such luxuries might do. Had he paid too dearly for the purchase? Had he been cheated?

Other thoughts, other anxieties, in which Eleanor had no share, which had their origin before he knew her, likewise perplexed him; and he was silent and moody, answering her questions shortly, and often leaning back and shutting his eyes as if in sleep. But as they neared Castle Penrhyn, the lethargic mood forsook him; he became restless, put the window down and looked out, and sighed often and impatiently.

"Are you bored with the length of the journey?" said the young wife; "it has been so beautiful!"

"Well, it may be so, for those who like travelling: I don't: I desire always to be on

foot, instead of cooped up in the carriage ;” and he again looked impatiently out.

“ Do you love the place much ? ”

“ What place ? What do you mean ? ”

“ Penrhyn Castle : are you very, very fond of it ? ”

Sir Stephen answered crossly. He said he thought it ridiculous to talk of loving a place ; that one loved people, not things ; that as to the castle, it was well enough, though not as fine as Lanark’s Lodge, and he had many improvements still to make ; that he did not know but he preferred the place in Wales, and that he was sorry not to have had Glencarrick, as the shooting was better there. She would soon judge for herself.

When he had said this, he became grave and silent : so did Eleanor ; she wondered if she should “ love ” Castle Penrhyn : she thought of Dunleath.

The carriage stopped at a lofty gateway of

stone, fringed with the drooping branches of immense firs. Something stern, solemn, and grand, was in its unadorned and unpretending structure, and the great bell rung like a knell on the evening air. There was a pause; the door of the Lodge opened, and then shut again; Sir Stephen looked out with a muttered oath.

"They seem to have forgotten the key," said Eleanor.

"It is some time since I have been here," answered her husband. "I suppose there has been no carriage through for a long while: but we are expected."

He kept his eyes fixed on the Lodge, out of which issued at length a beautiful young woman, followed by a handsome robust child of three or four years old, clinging to her gown, and staring at the carriages.

"Now, Bridget, open the gate, and don't keep us all night," said Sir Stephen, in a tone half angry, half familiar.

The order was obeyed ; the woman hastily unlocked the gate, swung it open, and then throwing her apron over her face, began to sob aloud. The gate, which had not been opened to the hinge, swung back again on the carriage ; the horses plunged, and one of the traces broke. The servant got down to assist the postillion.

“ Open the carriage-door : open the door, I say,” shouted Sir Stephen, in a tone of fury.

He got out of the carriage, and seizing the young woman by the arm, spoke to her ; first, apparently, in the way of menace ; then arguing with her ; then, as she continued to ob without answering, he released her arm, and laid his hand as if soothingly upon it ; but no sooner was she freed from his detaining grasp, than she turned and ran, still weeping loudly, along the path and up the steps, into the lodge, the door of which she shut violently, and locked on the inside.

The little child who had accompanied her, stood in the road ; his glance wandering from the lodge to the intruders. Sir Stephen passed him on his way to the carriage ; stopped, and taking half-a-crown from his purse, put it in his hand, bidding him tell his mother Sir Stephen would speak with her in the morning.

“An, ye gar mammy greet,” said the little urchin ; “I’ll no tak ye’re bonny big saxpence,” and he flung it under the horse’s feet, and shrunk sullenly away.

Then he retreated slowly to the door of the Lodge, stopping now and then to eye the party in the road. He leaned his curly head against the door, but apparently made no plea for admittance. They saw him stand there in the evening light, like a little shaggy peasant by Gainsborough : and an artist would have been glad of the sight ; for the light was lovely, and so was the child.

Sir Stephen came back with a slow, heavy step to the carriage. The trace was mended sufficiently to drive the brief remainder of the journey ; the confusion was over ; they could now proceed. He took his seat by Eleanor's side.

" Oh ! said she, eagerly, " do not let us go on without saying something more to that poor soul. What is the matter ? What ails her ? She is in some distress. What did you say to her ? Let me get out, and speak to her ; it seems so cruel to drive on without further notice. Let me get out ; you don't know how much wiser we women are in comforting than you men."

She smiled as she spoke, and made a movement, as if to leave the carriage. A burst of the wildest execration, a torrent of mad, furious oaths, escaped Sir Stephen.

" I think," said he, still choking with passion, " that women are the d—dest fools in creation. It is not enough to be pestered by Bridget,

who stands sobbing and shrieking before all the servants, but you must mix yourself up with it too, and make another scene. Let her come to her senses alone ; *your* meddling won't mend matters. I've told her I'll see her in the morning, and d—n me, if I encourage this sort of thing by seeing her a minute sooner."

He paused ; Eleanor was very pale.

"Well now, I dare say I've frightened you," said he, with an awkward change of manner. "I'm sorry I swore ; I beg pardon ; you're not angry, I hope?" and he took her hand.

He pressed her hand ; he kissed her ; he pressed her in his arms.

"You look so pale, Eleanor ; you know I can't bear to see you look in that way. It reminds me—" he paused ; and merely added, "never mind my swearing ; it's a habit, you know ; many a fellow swears worse than I do ; I'll break myself of it. I'm sorry I frightened you."

Eleanor was not frightened; she was not angry; she was only very sick and faint. Her look reminded him of a day he remembered well; the day she fainted in his arms at Aspendale; the day he feared she might not live to be his wedded wife. And over her shrinking soul the same shadow was passing now, that clouded it then. The same horror and repugnance of his strength and his violence; the same vague contrasting of the calm happy past with the stormy present; of gentle looks, and words, and tones, with her new life. Her hand was in his; her wedding-ring on her finger; she had lived to be his wife, and she was not angry. Yet Sir Stephen's irritation increased; he would have preferred that she should have remonstrated with him. He felt, however dimly, that between her soul and his, there lay "a great gulf."

He told Eleanor that the woman at the lodge, Bridget Owen, was the daughter of

one of his Welsh tenants ; that her husband had been transported for sheep-stealing, and that he had allowed her to leave Wales, and had given her the Lodge at the Castle, to provide her with a home away from former associations, and companions who might reproach her with her husband's disgrace. He said she was a wild tempered odd young woman, that his agent had already written to him to remove her, but he did not exactly know what to do with her.

Eleanor's gentle heart listened compassionately to this unhappy story, and early next morning she walked to the Lodge, with the wish and intention of speaking comforting words. They were received but coldly. When Eleanor alluded to the disgrace of the husband, and the possibility of his return, after his probationary exile, a reformed man ; a stare of angry amazement and a short, sullen laugh, were all the reply she elicited. She attempted to touch Bridget, by allusion

to the duty of bearing cheerfully for her child's sake ; but the woman's eye grew deeper in its gloom, as she drew the child from Eleanor's hand, saying :

" Let my boy be. He and I'll trouble no one ; husband or no husband."

She was impracticable. Often, as Eleanor passed the gate in the fresh mornings or the pleasant evenings, she was checked in her pity, by the expression of that young handsome face ; savage, sullen, and yet delicate, like a gipsy's. The little child would come down the path with the key, and take it back again without a smile, without an answer to Eleanor's greeting ; a rough miniature copy of his mother ; bold, wild, but never merry or caressing as children are wont to be. His dark glittering eyes haunted Eleanor. He looked, she thought, like the child of a transported felon ; as Sir Stephen had said he was—but Sir Stephen lied in that matter.

Penrhyn Castle was lone, and grey, and

gaunt ; Sir Stephen was violent and capricious ; Lady Raymond low-spirited and ill ; and Eleanor relapsed into dejection. When Tib came on a visit, she found, in the blotting-book of her room, a copy of verses which had been forgotten there. For Tib liked to meet fine people, and she wrote to offer a visit, as soon as she found the Lanarks, and Lady Margaret, and the Airle were expected ; and Emma and her children arriving about the same time, the house was nearly full ; so Eleanor ceded for Tib's use, a little sunny spare room, looking on the garden, which she called the bower-room, and where she used to draw and paint and write ; one of those cheery nooks, which people who have large fine houses always seem to select, as if to prove that grandeur is incompatible with comfort. Tib ferreted about, in the sunny room that had so evidently been occupied, and she found, as I have said, a portfolio, that had been over-



looked in arranging the apartment for her reception. Tib was like a squirrel with a nut, when she had found this portfolio ; and she hastily devoured the contents, hoping to discover some little secret ; or otherwise profit by the *trouvaille*.

At first her trouble was scarcely repaid ; for the contents of the book seemed very uninteresting : scraps of sketches ; patterns for arbours, and trellis-work ; designs for cottages ; ditto for a new school-house, on which was pencilled in Margaret's hand-writing, "you've forgotten to plan a staircase, is the school-master to climb into his room on a ladder ?" Rules for a general village oven, where on payment of a weekly subscription the poor might bake, (at which Tib laughed her snorting laugh, she thought the idea so ludicrous), and other matters of the same kind. But at last there was a sheet of scribbled writing ; and though it was a great disappointment to find it was not a letter

containing Eleanor's private sentiments to some one, but only a copy of verses, still, on an attentive perusal, they partly repaid Tib for her trouble, for they certainly seemed to have reference to young Lady Penrhyn herself.

The verses were headed "Aspendale," and Tib remembered that Aspendale Park was the name of the place where the bride had passed her childhood. Oho ! quoth Tib.

"ASPENDALE,

" Home of my youth ! within whose tranquil shades
Peace wandered hand in hand with joy and love ;
While the wind wafted, through the slight-stemmed
trees,

The distant murmurs of the woodland dove :—
Methinks I feel as though some magic bark
Had borne me from thee, in an hour of gloom ;
Sped over darkest seas, impelled by storms,
And left me, trembling, to a shipwrecked doom !
Hearing rough billows of an unknown sea,
Dash, ceaseless, on a bare and barren strand,

I turn, and find no boundary but rocks,
And all the people rugged as the land.

* * * * *

I weary of my life ; I long to hide
From angry looks, from discord, doubt, and pain,
The brawling riot of embittered words ;
The struggle to avoid reproach, in vain.
So ceaseless is the torment of the time,
So dull the weight by which I am opprest,
So hard and hopeless of a better change—
I yearn no more for happiness—but rest !

“ Oh ! that some angel from serener worlds,
With white calm feet, and floating moveless
wings,
Unheard—its solemn presence only known
By a soft halo on surrounding things—
Would come at midnight ; summoning my soul
To leave the jarring tumult of the earth,
The tasks excused, I feel too weak to bear ;
The years cut off, assigned me at my birth ;
And lifting me from Life’s rough path of thorns,
Its moaning night—its wild and perilous day—
Fling wide the undreaded gates of solemn Death,
And so, to peace and silence lead the way ! ”

Tib was not particularly fond of poetry, but she read and pondered over these verses ; and she showed them to Lady Macfarren. And Tib gave it as her opinion that young Lady Penrhyn was a "deceitful, whining little toad;" and Lady Macfarren said she had no patience with such sickly sentimentality about nothing at all ; when people had all the comforts of life round them, and every luxury that money could buy.

Things grew brighter when Lady Margaret came. Where did she ever come, that things did not seem the brighter ? She was pained by the mood in which she found Eleanor, and questioned her closely ; nor did Eleanor refuse her confidence to the friend who had been with her in such trying times. Lady Margaret was grieved ; and she was also surprised. She was innocent-hearted enough to feel perplexed, at this love and no love ; this earnest courtship on the part of a bridegroom, who swore at and quarrelled

with his bride. Sir Stephen had seemed so passionately attached to Eleanor !

Lady Margaret sighed as she listened ; and expressed regret for having advised the marriage ; and then she spoke a few simple sentences, which every bride would do well to remember and treasure up.

“ My dear Eleanor,” she said, “ the die is cast ; whatever this man’s faults, or the faults of his relatives may be, from him and from them you cannot now disentangle yourself. It behoves you therefore, to bear with them. It would be expedient to do this, even were it not your duty, but it *is* your duty. Many things are expedient, more or less, in this life : there is a choice of many paths : but there is but one right, and one wrong. What it is right to do, is always clear : how it will answer to do right, is in God’s hands. Take as your motto, my Eleanor, the old French device, ‘ *Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra.*’ Be cheerful ; be patient ; look

forward, do not look back. Do not take life's trials as prepared for you by God's creatures, but by God himself. Then there will be in your heart neither resentment, resistance, nor despondency ; for the sense of an over-ruling Providence will support you when you would faint, and control you when you would rebel."

No doubt this was better for Eleanor, than if she had been told that her husband was a brute, and that with her beauty and accomplishments she deserved a better fate. No doubt the house was pleasanter than if all its inmates had been drawn up in battle array, and indulged in perpetual skirmishes. Tib was spiteful, but every one else was so good-humoured, that Tib was nearly neutralised. The Duchess of Lanark played the harp with her beautiful white hands and arms, and looked up to the ceiling with her soft large eyes, every evening, to the delight and wonderment of the young sportsmen who had

come for a week's shooting to the Castle. The Airle was so jocular and inclined to romp, when the time for music was over and the reels began, that Tib actually once told him with much virgin majesty, not to "forget himself." Even Lady Macfarren softened in so much good company; for it is the peculiar idiosyncrasy of those who bully persons they deem beneath them, that they invariably cringe to persons above them.

Expeditions were made to objects of interest in the neighbourhood, and one expedition caused Eleanor's heart to beat and flutter, for it was made to Dunleath. What a merry party it seemed to all but Eleanor and Margaret! What a number of horses and carriages assembled at the gate of that lovely place, and stood inside the avenue, while the party lunched and walked through the grounds! What a loaded, hospitable showy luncheon, good old Mrs. Christison had provided! What desecrating tidiness there

was about the place; what red gravelled walks, and white scoured statues, and clipped laurel hedges! Dunleath was only saved from assuming the trim air of a citizen's box at Highgate, by the indestructible beauty of its scenery. The very sun-dial was scraped and cleaned and chipped, and the letters re-engraved—as though the hand of man could scrape away the shadow of all the past hours for ever and ever, and begin on a fresh score.

That sun-dial! how fondly and tearfully Eleanor looked at it; how easily her fancy conjured up the beautiful and noble-hearted Mrs. Stuart, sitting there; teaching her children, musing on her husband's reckless extravagance, hoping, contriving, enduring. How the solemn firs seemed to keep her memory; those great rough trees that could not be pared and pruned and decorated, to suit the taste of the present occupants; but with stiff branches which the winter's wind

swayed not when it came, and brown coppered stems, that gleamed like brass in the autumn sun, stood changeless and stern, amid the attempts, as Mrs. Christison termed it, to "set a' to rights."

Oh, lovely Dunleath ! how could you wear that air of trim neatness and vulgar gaiety ? Were not the reckless Laird and his noble wife lying in the cold kirkyard hard by ? Did not that true-hearted woman strive in vain to keep you for her son ? Did not David Stuart peril and lose fame and life for your sake, senseless Dunleath ?

Eleanor wandered away to the group of firs, and sat down there. She was followed by Tib's suitor, young Mr. Malcolm, who seated himself by her side ; stretching his long melancholy legs from under his kilt, with a sort of telescopic extension.

"Eh !" said he with a sigh, "eh ! Leddy Penrhyn, it's just a pairfect place, is it not ? and she's a pairfect creature — Miss Tib

A man might be pairfectly happy at Dunleath, Mem ! I'd never wish to go further. Do' ye no think it, Leddy Penrhyn ?"

And Eleanor said yes ; she thought Dunleath a lovely place. For she heard him enough to be conscious she was spoken to ; enough to give an intelligible reply ; though she was dreaming of the days, when safe and happy and unmarried, she sate by her guardian's side on the rocks of the roaring Linn !

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW HOPE.

BUT joy dawned over the waste of Eleanor's life, like the sun on a dreary landscape. Castle Penrhyn was gilded with glory. An heir was born : she was the mother of twin sons : safe, well, and the mother of twin sons, in spite of prophecies over which the nurses and old crones of the village had held many discussions, that there should " never again be an heir in the direct line."

There they were, dear children, in that cradle radiant with future hope ; and they

grew and prospered exceedingly. Prospered, not equally: Frederick, the younger, was strong, blooming and lovely; and Clephane, the elder, was pale and feeble. Mothers will know (if there was any difference in her love,) which Eleanor preferred. The one that was not beautiful—the one that was not strong—the one that being less to others, was more to her. Dear to her very soul, were those soft wistful intelligent eyes, the clasp of those little slender fingers, the tones of that timid voice; dearer (if possible) than the rosy beauty of the father's favourite; the roguish, joyous, rebellious, coaxing Fred.

Children! they are a sacred happiness. Their place in our hearts is marked out in every page of Holy Writ. By the mouth of a child, God reproved and doomed His High Priest; when the great 'house of Eli was to fall, and Hophni and Phineas to die, "both in one day." By the example of a child, Christ warned and exhorted his

disciples, where they would have forbidden the company of those little ones, as intrusive and trivial in the Great Presence.

Nearer to glory they stand than we, in this world and the next ! It was a gentle and not unholy fancy that made the Portuguese artist Siquiera, in one of his sweet pictures, form of millions of infant faces the floor of Heaven ; dividing it thus from the fiery vault beneath, with its groups of the damned and lost. For how many women has this image been realized ! How many have been saved from despair or sin by the voice and smile of these unconscious little ones ? The woman who is a mother, dwells in the immediate presence of guardian angels. She will bear on for her children's sake. She will toil for them—die for them—*live* for them—which is sometimes harder still. The neglected, miserable, maltreated wife, has still one bright spot in her home : in that darkness a watch-light burns : she has her

children's love, she will strive for her children. The woman tempted by passion, has still one safeguard stronger than all with which you would surround her ; she will not leave her children. The angry and outraged woman sees in those tiny features a pleading more eloquent than words ; her wrath against her husband melts in the sunshine of their eyes. Idiots are they, who in family quarrels seek to punish the mother by parting her from her offspring ; for in that blasphemy against nature they do violence to God's own decrees, and lift away from her heart the consecrated instruments of His power.

The fact that there are careless and unnatural mothers does not destroy the argument. So there are men who are murderers ; children who are monsters ; Nature makes exceptions to all her great unswerving rules ; but rules they will remain to the end of time. And among them, none more general, more mighty, more

unfailing, than the love of a mother for her child !

Eleanor loved her children with all the strength of her soul. Her trials and troubles and irritations seemed nothing, when balanced with this new joy. She did not know, she had not imagined, so much happiness remained upon earth. Even the thought of David Stuart, though it departed not, receded, fading into the mournful past. Memory gave place to hope. The lovely lines of Tennyson were realised for that early sorrow, as in his poem for the early love :

“ Baby fingers, waxen touches,
Pressed it from the mother’s heart.”

She wept no more, she pined no more, her heart fevered no more in hours of solitude, over vague and vain imaginings of what “ might have been.” The tangible and real delight sufficed her. Her eyes,

which had opened so sadly to the light of each recurring morn, woke with a sense of glad thanksgiving, and closed with a happy prayer for blessings on those darling heads. Castle Penrhyn no longer seemed so grey and gaunt ; the voices of little children were heard up and down the great grim house like the chirping of birds among boughs ; the quick patter of their merry feet running along the corridors, put a thrill of life into the old silence.

And they loved Eleanor ! With what a miracle of speed the quick years flew away, which changed those unconscious infants into loving children ; little friends ; anxious when she was ill ; sorry if she were vexed ; learning to please her ; able to discourse with her of what pleased them ! How strange was the difference between them ; and how absorbing the interest she felt, in watching that difference and training both those dawning minds.

How bewitching was Frederic, with his sweet merry temper, his jokes, his coaxing and disarming fondness; his generosity and self-denial in the miniature trials of a child's life; his courage; his easy love that warmly responded to the smallest kindness; his dear foolish trust in all the little world he saw; and his wonderful beauty which made even strangers pause to notice him, and ask his name.

How attaching was her shy pale Clephane, whom strangers never noticed (except with a secret doubt of his mother being able to rear him), but whose worth the mother knew. His piety and good sense; his quick ability; his patience in pain and sickness; his unwillingness to give trouble; his desire to serve; his companionableness, so far beyond what is supposed possible in a child; his quick perception of what vexed her; his fond unjealous admiration of his brother; his humble unquestioning acceptance of his own

position towards his father, as something less loving, strong, and attractive, and therefore less to be valued than Frederic. All, made Eleanor's heart yearn to him in secret, as every mother's heart will yearn to feebleness or defect; as the bird spreads her cherishing wings over her nestlings, because they are callow and cold.

And little Clephane's love for his mother was a sort of fervent adoration. No one else cared for him; but he had an instinct that her great love for him outsummed all he could hope from others. Often had the golden link been nearly broken. Often had his mother sate through the long nights and heavy days, a patient sentinel, guarding that life so dear to her with the shadow of Death for her fellow-watcher. And blooming Frederic would break away from his nurse as he went up stairs from his walk, and come in, a little too suddenly perhaps for a sick room—fresh as

a rose ; his bright eyes full of love and eagerness ; his long brown hair dishevelled by the wind ; and clasping his healthy little arms round his brother's neck, adjure him to get well—to “get well, and come out ; it is so pleasant out of doors !” And Sir Stephen would come in, and stand gazing for a few minutes at the little invalid, with feelings half of pity and half of discontent. He thought if Eleanor managed better, the boy would surely be stronger. He had never seen illness ; he could not comprehend it. His sister had always been robust ; he himself was a Hercules. There were moments when he experienced a sort of disgust and impatience to the ailing child, who was never well enough to follow him as Frederic did. He tried to take him, once or twice ; but once Clephane sate meekly down after a while, saying :

“I'll wait for your turning back, papa, on this big stone.”

And once he had to return with him, and carry him part of the way ; so Sir Stephen bid the child for the future "keep with his mother," and contented himself with the company of the stronger twin, who skipped after him like a little kid, and already showed an idolatrous admiration for his father's prowess in field sports.

"Come and see the stag papa has killed, Clephane ; only come and see ; such a big fellow that papa has shot down ! When I'm big, I'll kill the stags. Come and sit upon his back ; papa, put me on his back. He's got such horns ! you never saw such horns ! Come !"

And hand-in-hand the twins would go ; till Clephane shrank back a little, awed and sick, from the dead stately prey. And Sir Stephen, giving Frederic an exulting swing in the air and catching him in his strong arms, would pronounce him "his own fine boy—his own king of men." And Sir

Stephen spoke truth, when he said that he never was so fond of mortal thing, as he was of his boy Frederic.

So the children grew and prospered, and were taught and trained, and loved and cherished ; and the Welsh tenantry knew that an heir was born to inherit the land they dwelt on ; and the Highland tenantry saw the boys from time to time, and drank their health at tenant dinners ; and once were elated to a pitch of intense enthusiasm by little Frederic standing on the table to answer the toast by his father's desire ; while Clephane sate smiling by. A roar of approbation followed the hesitating sentence spoken by the healthy, handsome, blushing, and yet bold little child ; a roar of approbation, and then his health was drunk as "the heir." Sir Stephen rectified the mistake, and the eyes of the rough assembly fell with some disappointment on Clephane. Children are quick in feeling ; quicker than

grown people believe. Clephane sighed and coloured; his neighbour happened to be Tib's lank suitor, Mr. Malcolm. He put one of his long arms round the boy, and said kindly:

"Tak' heart, mon; I was but a puir bit wean mysel', and see noo what a mon I grew. Maybe ye'll be sich another."

Which caused little Clephane to laugh; for even to him, Mr. Malcolm seemed anything but the beau-ideal of what he desired to become; but he felt the kindness, and spoke of it to his mother when he went home; and gaunt Mr. Malcolm might have been quite puzzled, if a gipsy had told him that a beautiful lady thought kindly of him that night before she went to sleep, assuring him at the same time that it was not Tib.

Lady Margaret was almost as glad as Eleanor when the twins were born; and Eleanor sent her some verses she wrote while they were still little things. Verses, not for-

gotten in her blotting-book, to be ferreted out by Tib, like those she wrote in her days of despondency, but copied cheerfully in a letter to her friend. And when that best of friends came to see her and the children, she bent over the bed where they lay and tenderly repeated the last two lines, gently kissing the little sleepers ; after which she also kissed Eleanor, "as a reward," said she, laughingly, "for having made the verses." And though bright Margaret spoke in jest, I do not see why a kiss from her pure true mouth should not be as good a reward for a copy of verses, as compliments from kings, or the kiss a queen once bestowed on ugly Alain Chartier ; on which occasion the amazed ladies of honour were assured, that her majesty kissed him "not as a man, but as an author."

But Eleanor needed no reward ; not even Margaret's kiss : the subject of her verses lay smiling before her, and that was enough.

'THE BIRDIE'S SONG.

"As I came o'er the distant hills,
I heard a wee bird sing :
O pleasant are the primrose buds
In the perfumed breath of spring !
And pleasant are the mossy banks,
Beneath the birchen bowers,—
But a home wherein no children play,
Is a garden shorn of flowers !

"And once again I heard the bird,
His song was loud and clear :
How glorious are the leafy woods
In the summer of the year !
All clothed in green, the lovely boughs
Spread wide o'er land and lea,—
But the home wherein no son is born,
Is a land without a tree !

"The birdie ceased its happy song,
I heard its notes no more ;
The water rippled silently
To the blue lake's quiet shore :
But a mother sang her cradle hymn.
' All hallowed be your rest,
And angels watch the shining heads
That leaned on Jesu's breast ! ' "

CHAPTER VIII.

LONDON.

ELEANOR, and her little sons, and Lady Raymond, did not, however, always remain in their Highland retirement. Glencarrick and Castle Penrhyn claimed them in the autumn of the year; but Sir Stephen was member for a county, and, except the first year of her marriage, and the year she was ill of a fever, Eleanor had always been in London during the parliamentary season. She lived in that circle which those who compose it call the great world, and which, numerically, is a little world; for after you have been in

London for two or three seasons, you begin to know almost every one in it. Eleanor did not like the great world a bit better now than when she first came out as a young lady with Margaret as her chaperon; but she liked the power of receiving a pleasant circle at her own house, and she saw a great deal of the Duke and Duchess of Lanark and Lady Margaret; less of the Duke than of the Duchess, for he was greatly occupied with politics and little at home. But Eleanor grew to like the Duchess, and to see what was valuable in her. There is something valuable in all persons, if we would look for that instead of their faults.

Her frivolity seemed less, where all were more or less frivolously occupied; her kindness greater, where so few were kindly, so many much the reverse; her vanity pardonable, in the flood of flattery which greeted her. She was not bound to test it, and find what would remain if her real merits

stood clear from the influence of acquired advantages of rank and position. She scorned no one. She was bitter to no one. She was a little jealous of Margaret's fondness for Eleanor, but she was gentle and kind nevertheless; and to Eleanor, gentleness was ever a charm—a charm to which the stiff fierceness of Lady Macfarren, the shrewd spite of Tib, and the violence of Sir Stephen, stood out as habitual foils.

Politics, which occupied Sir Stephen and absorbed the Duke of Lanark, had no charm for young Lady Penrhyn. At best it appeared to be a sort of surgical profession; painful, tedious, often revolting, the operations necessary to amend the diseased condition of society. Perhaps she stood too near the great forge of government to judge calmly. She saw too much of the machinery, for one who so imperfectly comprehended the results; the black oily wheels; the suffocating atmosphere; the ceaseless din; the weary labour;

these she saw ; but not the pattern of gorgeous tapestry on which History was weaving a further measure of events. She saw many sudden conversions ; much toad-eating and fawning ; apparent breaches of faith, defended by the eloquent, pardoned by the good ; friendships broken, friends supplanted, chiefs deserted ; men who were once the stars of a circle, forgotten and neglected, flung aside like blunt tools no longer capable of work. She saw some whose hands could once have lifted the aspirant, trampled on as a stepping-stone to power ; and some who once craftily sued, become haughtily tyrannical. She saw, with amazed eyes, the little faults of great men ; the little hinges on which great interests turn. She thought of her father's weary struggling life, as David Stuart had described it to her, and wondered if men of equal talent and earnestness were toiling still, as thanklessly, in the service of the public and of their party.

To Margaret these matters wore a brighter aspect. From childhood she had lived in society where they formed the constant theme of discussion. Her beloved brother's talents were exerted in that line : she looked forward to seeing him in power. He had formed her opinions ; and his "peerless Margaret" was proud of comprehending what he taught her. To Margaret, political life was a stirring and glorious career.

The same difference of thought existed between the two friends in the lighter currents of Eleanor's new world of fashion. It requires really to belong to that strange world—to be brought up amongst that particular set, and so get the senses gradually blunted to the frivolity, pomposity, soul-deep (not manner-deep) vulgarity, and the wonderful profligacy of opinion which is combined with outward formalities, to be able to watch it all calmly. A full-grown human being, dropped suddenly into the

turmoil of what is called the great world, is apt to become sobered and saddened, if not disgusted, and to go home feeling depressed and dusty, like one who has taken a long unsatisfactory walk.

All her life long, Lady Margaret had lived in this land of the Bore-ians: she was accustomed to them. She was not travelling like Eleanor through a new country, where everything was salient, novel and peculiar. And though she felt some differences in her own heart, the experience rather enabled her to choose at once the companions most genial, cordial, and real, than taught her to pause over the faults of others.

Eleanor was always comparing the people she saw, with her own ideal of men and things. She was like a child seeing fantoccini for the first time: Margaret had seen the fantoccini dancing all her life. Eleanor fell into the great and grievous mistake of supposing people who seemed all so much

alike in manner, in pursuits, in conversational topics and conventional decorums, must be alike in heart and soul : Margaret knew that the uniform worn by the fashionable corps, no more compelled nature than the soldier's uniform annuls the variety of disposition or levels the worthy and unworthy in a regiment ; that in the same crowd where she saw those she could not but despise, she also saw those she respected from her soul ; and that the worth of the latter did not rub off like the bloom of the plum, in the process of shaking hands with the former.

The Duke came into the breakfast-room one morning, and found Eleanor reading the paper.

“ What an improvement, Lady Penrhyn ! I really believe you are studying the debates, at last ! ”

“ Do not hope it,” said Margaret, laughing ; “ I am sure Eleanor was reading either a murder, or a charity case ; and she was

thinking of the 'Times,' and the 'Times' Commissioner, as two mysterious beings who go about spying into abuses in disguise—like Caliph Haroun Alraschid and his Vizier. Confess, Eleanor, is not that your notion?"

"That the 'Times' Commissioner goes about with a turban on, and an aigrette of jewels in it—no: but that the power of the press is a very wonderful power, much more wonderful than that of the Caliph in the 'Arabian Tales'—yes."

"And quite as liable to abuse."

"I doubt," said the Duke, "'whether any power exists, equally great, and equally irresponsible, that is so little abused as the press of England. The complaints made of it from time to time tend, rather to show the confidence the public has in its general impartiality, and the high expectations formed of the line expected to be pursued by these exponents of popular opinion, than to condemn it. No general of an army, no admiral of a

fleet, has as much irresponsible power as the editor of one of the great London journals ; with less responsible control, for he has this difficulty to contend with, that his men are not bound to his opinions ; he can't shoot one as a deserter, or hang up another to the yard-arm for going over to the enemy. Nor can we, (fortunately,) shoot our editors as we did Admiral Byng, for defect of judgment 'in fighting our battles. The editor fights them as he pleases : we can neither reward nor degrade him ; and for my part I think, when we consider the multitude of minds employed, the variety of contending interests involved, and the rapidity of decision with which all this has to be sifted and arranged ; we should rather marvel at the ability with which the task is executed, than dwell on occasional fallibility of judgment, or perverted intentions. Any one would suppose by the magnificent idea of unswerving justice and perfection we attach to the idea of an editor, that we believed

the leading journals of the day to be conducted by the archangels Gabriel and Michael, instead of men liable to the same prejudices passions and errors with ourselves ; though probably possessed of thrice our ability, and forty times our industry in turning that ability to account."

"What I was thinking of," said Eleanor, "was a power apart from political discussion, the simple power of publication. How many wrongs have been redressed, that never would even have been known, without the aid of the press? It is the speaking-trumpet of the poor, by which they can hail those classes at a distance from them. That alone is a glorious power."

"Yes ; and even that is often misjudged : for I have seen it gravely argued by our continental neighbours (who are apt to see great moral questions in an inverted point of view), that our neglect of the labouring classes is proved, by our publications of inquiries into

their condition. Happy the people whose rights are fought out in the columns of the daily papers, instead of among the stones of the barricades ! Happy the people who are taught to look upon gradation as God's law not man's oppression ; and who appeal to the classes that have wealth and leisure, for aid, —not for equality !”

“ And happy the people who find the most fervent upholders of their rights, among those very classes ; is not that the last clause of the speech, Lanark ?” said Margaret fondly ; and she looked in her brother's countenance while she spoke.

He smiled in answer, and then said :

“ I came to tell you a great piece of news, which indeed you ought to have known last night, but that you were all gone to bed when I came in. There is a change of Ministry, and I have accepted my share of the trouble of the day. I am to be First Lord of the Admiralty. I see you are speechless

with triumph already, Margaret. I am twice the man in your feminine eyes, that I was yesterday, now that I am in office. But I must be very busy, so good bye."

"Now, can you tell why you also should be nearly as glad as I am?" said Margaret, as her eyes returned from following her brother to the door of the breakfast-room.

"Can anything be indifferent to me which makes your cheek flush, and your eyes sparkle so? Can anything be little to me, which is so much to you all? Of course, I am glad—so glad, dear Margaret."

"You heard Lanark say he was to be First Lord of the Admiralty?"

"Yes; I was surprised: I did not know he had been in the navy."

"Neither has he been in the navy, you poor little ignoramus. The First Lord of the Admiralty need not be in the navy, any more than the Secretary at War need be in the army, or the Chancellor of the Exchequer

a banker ; but do you see how his being First Lord especially interests you ?”

“ Me ! No.”

“ Do you know one Lieutenant Marsden, now on shore ; very anxious to get a ship, very restless, and very discontented ?”

“ Oh ! dearest Margaret,” said Eleanor, clasping her hands with sudden seriousness, “ if the Duke would indeed be so good ; if, in consideration of my disastrous story, and Godfrey’s real generosity at the time, though it was hardly, sternly done—he would do us this great service.”

“ Softly, softly, my Eleanor. You that were so innocent a minute ago, and now propose, in the most barefaced manner, a regular job. ‘ In consideration of your story, and Godfrey’s generosity,’ indeed ! That would never do. No : in consideration of the merits of this excellent young officer, who has been miraculously overlooked ; who lost three fingers boarding a slave-cutter, and

passed five years on the fatal coast of Sierra Leone."

"Oh, never, Margaret."

"Well, my dear, I don't say precisely those claims; but some claims a man must advance. I shall mention the three fingers, and the coast of Sierra Leone."

"No, no," said Eleanor, laughing.

"And I shall add, that he was a step-son of General Sir John Raymond, whose services in India speak for themselves."

"Ah! my poor father! That is true; though they say your political party, Margaret, are more famous for trying to conciliate their foes, than for rewarding their old friends; still less the relations of old friends, and of friends who are dead and gone, and can serve them no longer."

"You will make a poor petitioner, Eleanor, if you are so bitter. It is well I am to coax Lanark out of a ship, instead of you. Canning's 'needy knife-grinder,' who would

not feel his wrongs, is the right model for the politically-neglected."

"Am I bitter? Well, it is only when I think of my father; how his life was worn out of him in its very meridian, by thankless friends, grumbling at home at the difficulty of passing their half-digested measures abroad; no one helping, or caring for him. But I will not talk of it any more. Get a ship for Godfrey, Margaret. You will see I can thank, better than I can petition."

Meanwhile, Godfrey and Emma were invited to stay with Eleanor in town; and as ships are not obtained, commissioned, given away, and sent to foreign stations in a day; some little delay intervened, before the petition so easily settled between the two fair friends, could even be considered. Then there were a number of previous just claims. Then there was another opportunity of which Margaret and Eleanor had made very sure and which, I regret to say, I really think the

Duke ought to have made the occasion of Godfrey's advancement; but his duchess took a fit of extreme jealousy and displeasure at Margaret's interference; her large eyes had such an ill-used expression while she played the harp, and her answers were so peevish, that sundry explanations resulted with the Duke; and eventually a *protégé* of hers, a cousin she had never cared about and whom she never would have cared to see promoted, but for the sake of proving her own influence, was appointed instead of Godfrey. The Duke looked a little confused when he answered Margaret's glad interrogation—"Well, I suppose Godfrey is to have the 'Niobe?'" by the announcement that it was promised to Captain Wallace; and Margaret looked surprised; but after a moment's thought she kissed her brother's cheek and said, "Well, we must look forward." And that evening, when the Duchess had played through the last rapid variation of an air

which ought never to have had variations composed on it, for it was the mournful "Farewell to Lochaber," Margaret said gently :

"I wish you would exert your influence with Lanark; in a matter Eleanor has much at heart; and that is, getting Godfrey named to a ship. His claims are real enough, but in his over-crowded profession, it is a chance when a man gets them considered, if he has no one to speak for him."

The Duchess smiled, and said she would be very glad to do anything for Eleanor. Her opposition was withdrawn; she had been petitioned to! The next opportunity, however, was given away to the son of a political supporter; it was "advisable" to do this, and the Duke had to consider what was advisable. The next, to the brother of a political opponent; there was some grumbling about that, but it passed, and being successful, was considered an excellent bold stroke; the

next chance was swallowed up in one of those arrangements sometimes made in high quarters, the preliminaries of which had been arranged before the Duke held office. Some great man's nephew was a lawyer, and the Chancellor was to do something for him, on condition a certain young captain had something done for him. It was now the young captain's turn. So Godfrey waited for his opportunity; though he had what is called "such good interest;" and while he waited he staid with Eleanor and saw a little of "the great world."

And Godfrey took care neither to feel, nor to show, the smallest gratitude to any one concerned in the exertions now making to serve him. He considered Eleanor to be doing no more than her duty in being mindful of his interests, and that his claims had hitherto been most unduly overlooked. He did not scruple to sneer at and criticise the conduct of public men in general, and

the party in power in particular, even in presence of the Duke. He also declared that if he had the world to begin again, he would not enter a profession where a fellow might be knocked about all his life, without better reward than seeing other men who hadn't served half the time put over his head; and on the Duke reminding him, with a frank good-humoured smile, that he at least was still comparatively young; he replied dictatorially, that the Board of Admiralty was very apt to tell a man he was "too young" for promotion, until the time came when they could tell him that he was "too old." And Lady Raymond sighed, and said that was but too true; and pressed her son's hand as if it were the hand of a martyr.

And the Duke told Margaret privately, that her friend's brother might be a brave excellent officer, an honest man, a good son, and a true Christian; but that he thought him the most disagreeable companion he had ever

fallen in with. And Margaret sighed: not for Godfrey's sake, but for a passing remembrance of poor David Stuart's declaration in days of old, that he was puzzled how one so worthy could be so intolerable. Intolerable, thought Margaret, only because so utterly intolerant !

CHAPTER IX.

THE GREAT WORLD AGAIN.

GODFREY was not intolerable to Sir Stephen. It was a strange link to knit brothers-in-law together ; but it is certain Sir Stephen liked, in Godfrey, the sort of determined attempt to " keep Eleanor under," which the stern Lieutenant still evinced, in spite of her marriage and altered position. They recurred to past times too ; as they did at Penrhyn Castle, as they did whenever they met. They abused David Stuart to their heart's content ; they poured out

alternate vials of wrath and scorn upon his memory. By one of the strange twists of human feeling, Godfrey was glad to be in Eleanor's house and yet independent of her, to be there as her husband's friend, more than as her brother. Nor was he without thankfulness that his mother had, in this man's house, a luxurious unmolested home ; though he loathed the memory of the man whose treachery made such dependance a matter of necessity. As to Lady Raymond, her dependance sat very lightly upon her ; it seemed to her, to be on her own child. She saw little of Sir Stephen ; she once saw him in a passion, and his violence frightened her so, that she became hysterical and continued ill for many days : but Eleanor never spoke to her mother of her husband, so that beyond whispering to Godfrey that "Sir Stephen seemed a terrible man when provoked," she had nothing to communicate respecting him ; and to that, Godfrey only

responded sternly, "that he presumed Eleanor knew the duty of obedience to her husband, however wilful her girlhood might have been:" and common-place Emma ventured on a little spontaneous observation, (which she made, poor soul, in the innocent sincerity of her heart,) that "it was so noble and generous of Sir Stephen marrying Eleanor when she had nothing, that Eleanor could not fail to love him, and look up to him."

As to the world of fashion, it was an embodiment of all that Godfrey most condemned; and hot were the discussions sometimes, when Lady Margaret was of the party and defended what Godfrey called the "corrupt set," she belonged to. Her opposition however was not near so provoking to Godfrey as Eleanor's neutrality, who, after arguing a little, had a habit of withdrawing into the refuge of silence; or going, as Sir Stephen impolitely expressed it, "into one of her d—d sullen fits."

For Sir Stephen was no longer "in love" with Eleanor. Perhaps even if he had been, he might have been impolite : there are a particular class of men who seem to imagine they have paid their wives so extraordinary a compliment in marrying them, that they are released from the tax of all future civilities. They have given a premium, and are to live rent-free.

A conversation which Godfrey partly overheard between the Duchess, Lady Margaret, and his sister—as he stood, talking to nobody, knowing nobody, swinging his hat in the middle of the room—gave him an excellent text for his criticisms.

A lady, elegant, though not pretty, came up to the party. She shook hands with the Duchess of Lanark with a little eager squeeze, then with Margaret; and after passing Mrs. Godfrey, who intervened, as if she had been merely a part of the ottoman, she extended one finger and half a smile, to

Eleanor, and glided on towards the Duke, with whom she was soon engaged in what seemed a playful animated conversation.

"Aha!" said the Duchess of Lanark, "Lady Eliza has found out that you will never be of any use, Eleanor. Don't you remember what a friend she made of you the first two seasons you came to London?"

"But how do you mean that I can be of no use? What did she expect of me?"

"Oh!" said Margaret, laughing, "the Duchess means, that with all your undeniable beauty, and your foolish cleverness that you keep for home friends instead of turning it to account, you have no *savoir faire*."

"But what does she want of me?"

"She wants of you, what she wants of us all. She has always some little intrigue on foot; some influence to exert; some one

to protect, or some one to frustrate, in the political world; and you are precisely the person, on a casual inspection, to further her views."

"With political people? with Ministers? O, Margaret!"

"Why not? Ministers are but men; and men from their hard occupied intellectual lives, very glad to unbend. They are as merry as schoolboys, at a fish dinner at Greenwich. Besides, you are quite capable of conversing with most men, Eleanor; you must be conscious of that. Now, Lady Eliza has gone on, all her life, carefully selecting and carefully dropping her acquaintance. She has no friends, in *your* innocent translation of the word; but she has a circle; and there is not one of that circle that she does not turn to account. If any of the set prove useless, or drop in the estimation of the world, down they go in Lady Eliza's. That winning smile, and

accueil gracieux, alter and fade into the genteelest little stare of alienation possible."

"There, and that is your world!" said Godfrey scornfully, as he listened to the close of the last sentence.

"I did not make the world, Mr. Marsden," said Margaret, laughing; "I found it so when I came into it, and I am afraid I shall leave it so, when I go out of it."

"It should teach you to despise and scorn those you live amongst."

"No, it should teach me only not to pin my faith on chance acquaintances, instead of home friends. Half the discontents of life might be avoided, if we were content within our natural boundaries. Units as we are, ought not the inclining of the hearts of some eight or ten familiar persons towards us, to satisfy our need? but no; we insist on strangers valuing, and liking, and esteeming, and standing firmly

by us ; as if they could, as if they would, as if it were possible."

"They need not, at all events, forsake you ; as you have just described. If they find fault, let them also hear justification."

"Justification ! My dear Mr. Marsden, you may not be able to give it ; you cannot walk up to strangers, and say, 'I fear you have heard that I am stingy, stupid, immoral, violent ; I beg to assure you, on the contrary, that I am the most generous, sprightly, well-conducted person alive.' Even if you could, you have yet to learn how the world will be bored by your wrongs, and yawn over your arguments. The world don't care a brass farthing whether you are falsely accused or no ; why should it ? Your friends care ; justify yourself to them. Surely, the little circle who willingly draw round us, is better than the ranks of foes and neutrals we are for ever seeking to penetrate. What

can it signify what is said by a heap and herd of people who don't know you? And yet I have sometimes seen people more angry at the dislike of strangers, than at the defection of friends."

"Why, no man likes to be dropped and shunned; nor any woman either, I should suppose; as your Lady Elizas seem to be in the habit of doing."

"It ought to be indifferent to us; as no social flattery can make a bad man esteem himself, or feel other than what he is—a successful knave—so no social neglect can deprive man or woman of their real consciousness of desert. Besides, what, after all, is the dropping and shunning of the world? they don't think it worth while to invite you, or they won't invite you, to mortify you. Is it such a loss? Do those who are invited say, 'I'm so sorry for you! I am going to this or that delightful party!' Do they not, on the contrary, very often lament the hard

fate that compels their attendance as a matter of form? Do they not say, 'I must go, just for once, for half an hour, to shew myself, and this is the third Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday I have failed.' Once in a dozen times you may regret not having been asked; you may wish to see somebody, or something; or you may feel hurt, because the slight is from some unexpected quarter, or from some one to whom you yourself have formerly shown cordial hospitality; but the other eleven times it would be a bore. Are you less cheerful or well entertained in your own house, reading a pleasant book, or chatting with one or two friends who have at least the merit of voluntarily seeking your society, than in a crowded room, saying the same thing over and over again to a number of hot inattentive people, and getting a half-welcome from great lords, or what the Vicar of Wakefield wittily calls, a "mutilated curtsey" from fine ladies?"

“ You are a fine lady yourself, Lady Margaret, and you defend all that is done in that preposterous set ; moreover you cannot possibly tell, by your own experience, what it is to be snubbed, or looked down upon.”

“ All sets are alike,” said Margaret, laughing. “ When I was very young, I had an excellent lesson against being ‘ fine,’ as you call it. Mr. Fordyce wished me to go to a ball at the house of a Scotch physician ; I demurred, because it was not my ‘ set,’ but he wished it, and I went. Of course I knew no one. As I sate alone (musing rather saucily, I must own, on the inferior company I had honoured with my presence) two young men sauntered through the room.

“ ‘ Oh !’ said one, ‘ what a beautiful face : who is she ? I’ll get introduced, and ask her to dance.’

“ ‘ No, no, Brooks, don’t,’ said his companion eagerly, ‘ she’s been sitting there

alone all night: *it's somebody that nobody knows.*'

"I could not help laughing; and then I did what was wiser than laughing, I reflected that these people were not a bit more ridiculous, in fact, than I had been in my secret heart; and whenever in after years I felt a little inclined to play the fine lady, I remembered Mr. Brooks and his friend, and my own temporary obscurity."

"Ah! but you would have been indulgent and cordial without any such lesson, Margaret," interposed Eleanor. "It is in you—it is in your nature—to be indulgent, to be generous."

"Indulgent to whom?" said the Duke, who had left Lady Eliza, and now joined the group before Godfrey. "Are ladies ever indulgent to each other?"

"We are, you see," said Margaret, smiling.

"You are an exception to the general rule,"

sneered Godfrey ; " for the inhumanity of women to each other is notorious."

" Ah ! what is called inhumanity ; the not giving each other support under untoward circumstances. That is very often more from cowardice than cruelty."

" Oh, Margaret, this time Godfrey is right ; nothing amazes me like the unkindness of women to each other. I assure you I have felt quite startled at hearing them ; I have wondered how happy creatures, laying their protected heads on safe home-pillows, could judge so hardly as they do, others who perhaps, have led a life of tears ; some one, perhaps, who has neither home, mother, or child, to keep her from drifting with the tide."

" Yes, and their indulgence, when they do give it," said Godfrey eagerly, " is given so idiotically. You see them all petting and making much of some foolish wanton, with a high-spirited kindly husband, vainly trying

to reclaim her, and all set against some woman twice as noble-hearted as her would-be judges. They always combine against the wrong person."

"They don't combine at all;" said Lady Margaret. "They are the only visible realisation of that political Irishism, an 'armed neutrality.' With respect to any woman in an awkward position, they are all ready to fall upon her as a victim, or to uphold, or to let her alone; but chance must decide which it shall be."

"Chance and self-interest," said Godfrey. "There is a great talk of English morality, but you may ride roughshod over the morality of the whole country, if you can but put a pair of gold spurs to your heels."

"A little of that, perhaps," said the Duke; "but the main reason (if Margaret will forgive my saying so), is the want of justice which is apparent in every woman; and which is, in fact, a want of understanding."

If any proof were needed of the inferiority of intellect in women, it would be found in their treatment of each other. They are all, and always, unjust. They are often kind. You can have tenderness, pity, enthusiasm, self-sacrifice, any thing from them except justice. That is a male virtue. For that they have neither courage nor comprehension. If they uphold a cause, it is because they are 'so sorry' for some one. Often they are 'sorry,' and yet dare not for their lives uphold. Often, as Mr. Marsden has said, they uphold, with a perversion of the real merits of different cases, that would make one smile, if it did not make one sigh. Those from whom better things might be expected, are not exempt. One of the rudest acts I ever saw done by one woman to another, was by a lady then occupied in compiling a history. Fit you are, I thought, to sift the facts of history, who cannot even judge those of your own time. And the

event proved I was right. When the book came out, it was most womanly. Graphic and interesting as a narrative; admirable as a moral work; but of no more value as an historical record, (from that very defect, an utter want of justice, an absence of the power of conviction, a leaning and swaying first to one feminine prejudice and then to another), than a book of fables. A man would have produced a history; the woman produced a very excellent story-book for the school-room."

"Well, Lanark," said the Duchess rather pettishly, "you are the last person I should have expected to run down our sex; you, who are always paying us compliments. I am sure Margaret and I have good reason to be surprised at your opinions to-night."

"My opinion to-night, has been my opinion always," said the Duke gently; "but, perhaps, if I had not the happy consciousness that neither of those dearest to me—neither

my wife, nor my sister, ever indulge in that bitterness which all men hate to hear, I should not express it. There are three sorts of tolerance: the tolerance of tenderness, and that," said he with a smile, "you certainly have; the tolerance of carelessness, which I should be sorry to see in any one I loved; and the tolerance of justice, which I agree with Margaret in thinking the nearest approach we can make to the angelic nature. And now let us all go to bed."

Which accordingly they did; rather to Godfrey's discomfiture, who had intended in spite of the lateness of the hour, to argue that pure true justice was totally inconsistent with tolerance. He was so full of this, that he even talked of it to Emma on their way home; but desisted on her simply confessing that she had been too drowsy to hear the latter part of the evening's conversation: in fact she feared she had been asleep; but hoped no one had observed it, as it would

have seemed so rude, when they were talking about what interested them all so much. She thought people ought to be kind to each other, and merciful; but certainly, as Godfrey said, one ought not to be indulgent to those who were doing what they knew was wrong.

So Godfrey left off talking to his wife; and opening his dressing-room door impatiently, entered and shut it again with a hard determined ~~clap~~, as though it had been a trap in which he had just caught a sinner; and while he undressed, he wondered how long it would be before he could obtain a ship, and get afloat.

CHAPTER X.

EVENTS.

AT length the frigate was obtained: Godfrey was exceedingly glad, and no one was the least sorry, except Emma. The amount of love in her simple heart, for that square stern man, none knew but Heaven. She did not talk of it; for Emma was not eloquent, and she was extremely shy: only once, when confidentially questioned by the Duchess of Lanark, (who was very curious about other women's homes, and the degrees of affection and comfort enjoyed therein),

she owned hesitatingly, that she thought Godfrey "very grand—the grandest creature that ever was." And though the Duchess might puzzle a little over the exact meaning of the phrase, it obviously implied an intense conviction of his superiority which being precisely the feeling Godfrey most wished to inspire, it is to be presumed he was contented with his wife.

It would have been hard indeed upon her had he not been contented! Faithfully she did her duty "in that state of life into which it had pleased God to call her;" and it may be, that her soul walked the path to heaven with more certainty than many a brighter intelligence. Her children were as carefully trained as Eleanor's; and though none were as lovely as Frederic, or as clever as Clephane, they were good and governable. Even the last new baby (*vice* a first, second, and third baby, superseded) had its own green bud of a notion of right and wrong; and put down

its little wilful, quivering lip and shook the tears from its glittering eyes, at the uplifted finger, warning it not to let

“ Its angry passions rise,”

long before it was old enough to comprehend the sweet lines in the volume of hymns by Dr. Watts, which Emma kept in her pocket, and which she continually referred to ; saying that it put all she wanted to say to the children “ into such nice words !”

Oh, Watts ! gentle-hearted old man ! did you ever foresee the universal interest which would link itself to your name, among the innocent hearts of earth ? Did angels reveal to you in your own death-hour, how many a dying child would murmur your pleasant hymns as its farewell to earth ?—how many living children repeat them as their most familiar notions of prayer ? Did you foretel, that in your native land and wherever its language is spoken, the purer and least

sinful portion of the ever-shifting generations, would be trained with your words? And now, in that better world of glory, whose mysteries of companionship we are not allowed to penetrate, do the souls of young children crowd round you? do you hold sweet converse with those, who perhaps were first led into the track of glory by the faint light which those sparks of your soul left on earth? Do they recognise you, the souls of our departed little ones—souls of the children of the long ago dead; souls of the children of the living; lost and lamented, and then fading from memory like sweet dreams?

It may be so; and that when the great responsible gift of authorship is accounted for, your crown will be brighter than that bestowed on philosophers and sages!

As the departure of Godfrey drew near, Emma had a hard struggle to keep back all evidence of her sorrow; for she knew it displeased her stern helpmate, and she

knew that it was in the natural course of his profession that he should make these long absences. Still, such partings are hard; and it is lonesome and dispiriting, to live on a narrow income, with helpless children, the husband and father away in storms and danger! So may God bless all sailors' wives, say I; may those they wait for, come back in safety over the trackless ocean to their own sea-surrounded country; and may they always find a heart as innocently glad of their return, as poor Emma Marsden's!

Eleanor would fain have lessened the loneliness of her sister-in-law, by making her reside under her own roof during Godfrey's absence; but this he did not like; it did not accord with his notions of independence; and he preferred that his wife should remain in her own little cottage, and superintend her humble establishment.

Before the ship sailed, two events took

place, which in different degrees, saddened them all. Lady Raymond died ; and Lady Margaret Fordyce was summoned to Italy by the old Duchess of Lanark. Lady Raymond died very happily, seeing in Eleanor's destiny only a very comfortable position in life, and in her sweet children happiness for years to come.

Old Mrs. Christison sent her careful prescriptions for preparing Iceland moss jelly (which, it is fair to the kind old lady to state, were copied out with tears of anxiety) ; and Lady Raymond had so great a faith in the little gossiping tender Scotchwoman, that for many days previous to her decease she would take nothing but "a little of Mrs. Christison's moss," and begged Eleanor would tell her so.

It was a bond between Eleanor and that simple heart afterwards, that in her limited and narrow way she had done her best always to serve and soothe the gentle creature, who

had at least departed this life without ever knowing what it was *not* to be served and soothed, in times of trial, sickness, or grief.

Godfrey's regret for his mother, was strong and vehement. As the boat rowed off that took him on board his new ship, and he looked back and reflected that when next he touched old England's shores, she would not be there to welcome him; he folded his arms hard across his breast, and the sailors thought they had never seen so stern-faced a commander; yet Godfrey was nearer a burst of weeping at that moment than ever he had been in his life. He loved his mother, dearly and well. He lamented her, sorely and long.

Eleanor thought, as a matter of course, the money which Charles had restored to Lady Raymond, might now return to his wife; and she was somewhat surprised at the angry refusal of Sir Stephen to perform what she thought a moderate piece of gene-

rosity. Sir Stephen judged differently. He said there could be no doubt Godfrey's view was a just one: that Sir John Raymond would have left him no legacy at all, if he had imagined it possible his own daughter would be penniless; and, therefore, the retaining it as her portion was a matter of course.

Eleanor sighed. They were so rich, it made little difference to them; it would make a great difference to Emma and her children. But she had not power to decide it otherwise.

The year of Lady Raymond's death, Eleanor passed entirely at Castle Penrhyn and Glencarrick. Her children were at once her solace and her joy; and little Clephane's health seemed to have made a wonderful rally. His spirits were gayer, his step more elastic; and the blooming Frederic was not always Sir Stephen's sole companion.

In her Highland retirement young Lady Penrhyn was idolised and blessed. Many a scheme for the poor, many a good work, that had been set on foot at Aspendale, was now repeated in the sunny obscurity of these northern hills. Her plans and her schools, which had endured for years before it was the fashion to be interested in these things, were copied, as unacknowledged hints, in later days. Individual examples are the hinges on which the great doors of reform and progress turn. Many an experimental struggle of this kind is made, before some great good name forms a rallying point, and hangs a sort of banner over good deeds—before the philanthropy of vanity makes that glorious, which was before merely useful. Eleanor had her clubs, her schools, her aids to emigration, her little land allotments, her prizes for spinning and weaving, her adult female society for teaching home usefulness to those who were to be thrifty poor men's

wives, without either the encouragement of praise, or the assistance of subscriptions. Silently, obscurely, she worked; and long afterwards, when others were doing the same sort of thing on a more dazzling scale, they said they thought they recollected seeing an attempt of that kind in Scotland, on Sir Stephen Penrhyn's property; but a mere attempt; nothing like what they were doing themselves, and what the whole world were called to look on at.

Among the objects of interest at the Castle, she had at first greatly exerted herself in favour of the handsome young Welsh-woman at the Lodge; but life and life's experience wrought a great change in Eleanor's feelings in this particular case. On their arrival, her frequent patient attempts to lead Bridget Owen to talk of her position and her misfortunes, were frustrated by sullen silence. She would see Eleanor approach from the casement; and turning away her

fierce, dejected, and most beautiful eyes, would affect to be busy within, and send the child to stand ready with the key of the gate; leaving, as it were, no excuse for intrusion. Then, a change took place; something insolent and cheerful dawned in Bridget Owen's manner; she stood idle in the sun, her glossy black hair tied with a red handkerchief, watching the gardener as he planned a garden by the Lodge and trained creepers and roses round the windows. She sate idle in the porch, while an old woman busied herself within and without in the household tasks necessary to be done. The little boy no longer brought the key to Eleanor; the old woman carried it down; or the gardener, if he was working there, opened the gate.

As she was walking, on her return after the second season she passed in London, Eleanor saw Bridget Owen with a baby in her arms. She stopped and spoke to Sandy,

who was busy on a palisade of rustic work, under the gardener's orders.

"Sandy," said she, "whose child is it that Bridget is taking charge of? Is any one ill in the village?"

Sandy paused before he answered, and was long finishing a twist in the interlaced wood.

"Troth, mileddy, I dinna ken," said he at last without looking up, "I'm thinking it's just her ain, or the deevil's!"

Her own! hers; the wife of a felon exiled beyond seas? Eleanor coloured, hesitated, went on a few steps, and then turned back.

She went up the little path to the Lodge, apparently unexpected, for Bridget Owen who had been sitting in the porch, rose hastily with the infant in her arms and continued standing. She had long ceased to offer the respect of a curtesy when Eleanor appeared. The heart of that

pure young wife and mother beat fast and faint.

“Whose child are you taking care of, Bridget?” said she.

Here was a moment's silence; and Eleanor's eyes, which had rested on the infant, were lifted to Bridget's face. She received the answer, and the look with which it was accompanied she never forgot.

“Mine!” said the voice: and the look said, “question me further if you dare!”

Mine. She admitted it. She gave the child a passionate kiss; she looked again at Eleanor; and then she stepped within the threshold of her decorated cottage, with the pride of a gipsy queen. She did not close the door. She knew she had dropped a bar between her and that pale astonished lady, stronger than iron. She had no fear of being followed.

For a minute, Eleanor remained speechless; rooted to the spot; gazing forward,

but seeing nothing ; then she knew that Bridget's eldest child, the pretty gipsy-looking boy, had stolen to the door, and was watching her ; something roguish in his smile perhaps made her think, for a moment, that he resembled her little Frederic.

She turned, and rapidly redescended the path. As she did so, her light dress, fluttering, caught on the half-finished fence at which Sandy and the gardener were working. Her back had been towards these men ; but, in turning to disengage her dress, she suddenly faced them. They were not working at the fence ; they were watching her. Keenly, narrowly, with the acute watch of those who never read any books but the looks of their superiors, and read those all day long and draw their own conclusions. In the gardener's countenance there was only a shrewd cunning, but in poor old Sandy's there was something more. As he came forward to help to disengage her muslin gown, his

respect struggled in vain with his sympathy. He had been her father's servant; David Stuart's servant; he remembered her as a child; and the conscious words broke piteously from his lips, "Oh, miledddy, we've a' our trials."

The lady of the Castle shunned her servant's gaze. Her own averted eyes wandered past the garden of the Lodge—that little paradise in the rough group of firs—that star of flowers and ornament, by the grim old gateway of her domain—to the open casement where Bridget stood, rocking her infant on her breast. Outside the same window, leaning against it, stood the elder child. The golden sunset fell softly on the group; and Eleanor remembered how she had seen the pretty boy in the same sort of light, the first evening she arrived at the gate of her new home; when Bridget Owen wept—and Eleanor pitied her!

Among the miracles of the working of

memory, none perhaps is greater than that power of remaining dormant, which recollections the most vivid and the most important seem to possess. How they entered our minds; where they have been garnered up; why we garnered them at all, not then knowing the weight we should afterwards attach to them; are secrets known only to Him who framed our complex nature.

As Eleanor turned from the Lodge that day, a thousand looks, words, and scenes, crowded on her brain, which she was wholly unconscious of having ever noted while they passed, but which weaved themselves into strange connection with her present impressions. "Remember us," they seemed to say; "we are *the proofs*."

A dark thought haunted Eleanor; a dark thought, which strangely included that bright spot, crowded with flowers; that pretty child; the Lodge, and the woman who lived there. And when Sir Stephen came in from shoot-

ing on that particular day, he told Eleanor that she looked so pale, he thought she must have taken a chill. It was a chill that never left Eleanor's heart—that seemed to freeze her most when her heart was warmest—when she sat by her children's cradles.

Her children! Oh, how she loved them, as they lay there in all the beauty of purity; substitutes for the hope of any other love, or any other trust upon earth, within the circle of home—of that home at once the refuge and the prison of her youth!

And from the day when Eleanor had seen Bridget Owen with the infant in her arms, she never made any further attempt to soothe or reason with her. She never stopped to gather flowers from the wild profusion growing there. She never lingered to caress the little boy. She came seldom that way out of the park; and when she did, it was with a rapid step and down-cast eye, as though something evil dwelt

there. And of late, Bridget Owen might be seen working on the rustic bench in the garden ; and perhaps singing at her work ; never heeding or stopping in her song because Eleanor went by, but ordering the old woman down to the gate with the key, and taking it back carelessly, singing as before ; and the old woman seemed to be Bridget's servant, and servant to Bridget's children.

So time sped on, till Eleanor had been married between seven and eight years.

CHAPTER XI.

SOLICITUDE.

THEY were at Glencarrick. The sun shone bright on the lake ; and the heather lay purple on the hill. The children were at their morning tasks by Eleanor's side, and she had just succeeded in engaging Frederic's attention to his book, after repeated assurances that he could not learn,—“because the voices of the flies disturb me so, buzzin' about, and it 'minds me of flowers,”—when Sir Stephen came in.

“Eleanor,” said he, “I want the boys ; I

want to take them over the hill, to Donald Macpherson's farm."

"Oh, yes! with papa—with papa!" joyously exclaimed the little truant, as he jumped down from his chair, and caught his father's hand.

"Is it not very far for the boys? Do you want them both?" And Eleanor looked anxiously out at the distant spot to which their morning pilgrimage tended.

"Yes, I want them both. I'm sure Clephane is strong enough now; you make a girl and a bookworm of that boy. Janet was saying this morning, that it was quite absurd that he couldn't do what other children of his age are allowed to do with the most perfect impunity."

"I assure you I do not think Clephane is strong enough to walk to Macpherson's and back."

"Well, he can have the pony, and ride and tie with Frederic. There are three or

four of my tenants coming over there—there's Pearson from Perth; he's never seen the boys; I want him to see them. We shall be back before sunset. Come along, boys."

Clephane looked wistfully at his mother. She kissed both the children, and said :

"I hope you will not be late; there is a heavy night-dew at this time of year, and it turns so chill in the evening."

"Oh! d—n it," said Sir Stephen impatiently, "the boy must begin some time or other to do like other boys, and I'll look after him. Janet's going with us, and we shall be back to dinner."

"Now then," called Lady Macfarren's loud voice from the lawn, "are you ready, Stephen? come away! come away, my man Fred; come away, young lady (for you're only half a boy, Clephane); come away, dogs, and let's be off for the hill."

They were off; and Eleanor stood and

watched them for a while. Little Frederic skipping by his father's side, and Clephane on his pony, and the tall figures of Sir Stephen and his sister, making, as it seemed to Eleanor, strides of equal strength through the long heather which fringed the track. She watched them out of sight, and then she closed the little lesson books, and wandered out to sketch; for at Glencarrick she had none of the occupations of Castle Penrhyn; her schools, her poor, and her sick, and the numerous small matters which engage the attention of those who deem that "property has its duties as well as its rights." As she returned, she met Lady Macfarren coming towards the house.

"Are the boys in?" said Eleanor, "I am glad you are back so early in the day."

"There's no one home but myself," said her sister-in-law. "They went a little beyond the farm to look at some cattle that were for sale,

and that Mr. Pearson was just mad about ; I'd seen all I wanted to see, and so I came away."

"It is a pity they went further, because of Clephane ; was he very tired ?"

"Oh ! he's just spoilt, that's what he is ; and I should think Stephen had had enough of him by this time. He's afraid to ride his pony, and he's not able for the walk ; and he won't speak out, and have done with it, and be left behind ; but keeps looking at his father and me while we're speaking, to see which we want him to do ; I never saw such a milksop as that boy, in all my life—I never saw such a poor creeping creature ; heaven knows whose blood he's got in his veins. There's not a drop of mine or Stephen's, I'm sure."

"No, he is not at all strong," said Eleanor, with a sigh ; and a certain thrill of bitterness passed through her heart, at the image of her weary little boy, watching the countenances of his robust, unloving relatives,

to see how he could be least a burden, after having once set out. A burden ! her treasure, and her love !

"I wish he had returned with you," she said.

Lady Macfarren gave a short, scornful laugh.

"I'm not very fond of brats, as you know—not even of Stephen's—though Frederic's a nice child enough ; and I had no wish to be three hours instead of one, coming over the hill this hot day, I assure you. No such dawdling work for me. I'd send the boy out with a nurse, next time. Indeed I advised Stephen to threaten him."

"To threaten him—threaten Clephane ?" said Eleanor, the blood rushing to her cheek ;
"for what reason ?"

"Ah ! there's a good deal of hypocrisy and slyness in these sort of children, sometimes. Making themselves of consequence,

and, pretending they can't do what they can do well enough, and only want to be made to do. If he was mine, I'd flog it out of him in a week."

"Your system did not answer very well with your own."

It was the first exasperated sentence Eleanor had ever flung at her sister-in-law. Lady Macfarren's son had run away from home, and entered the merchant service, writing word (not to his mother, but to Sir Stephen) that he knew he'd entered a hard life, but if he was to be ill-used, he'd rather it should be by strangers. Her colour rose at the taunt, and her eyes flashed fire.

"There's nothing I did to my own," she said, "that I wouldn't do again ten times over, if I had the guiding of him; and I just pray that the pride may be ground out of him; for not a penny will I ever pay to help him, not if he stood there a shivering beggar,

and wanted but a crust of bread!" and she swung her fierce arm round, and pointed to the portico of the house.

Eleanor looked at her with a shudder of repugnance.

"Oh! no one would believe that you had ever been a mother!" said she, as she turned away. "No one would think it possible."

But she-wolves have cubs; and motherhood had not been denied to Lady Macfarren.

"I'll tell you what it is, Lady Penrhyn," said the gaunt woman, coming a step or two nearer her shrinking sister-in-law, "the sooner Clephane, and Frederic too, are taken out of your hands, and put to some good hard school, the better. Who ever heard of a couple of lads of their age sitting perched up, learning reading and writing from a woman? It's time they were weaned of such mother's milk, and so I've told Stephen; and I think you'll find you'll have

little more of this coddling home-work. We're going to pack them off to school in Edinburgh."

To school ! Frederic — Clephane — her pale, gentle Clephane ! Eleanor was startled. She wondered how she could prevent this—this, which she knew to be unnecessary ; for David Stuart had given her an education, which made her more than usually able to conduct that of her little sons. She planned all she would say to Sir Stephen to convince him—to persuade him that it would be best for the children to be at home, at least for a year or two longer. She conned over all the arguments she could think of, as likely to weigh with him ; and then she sighed ; for she knew that it would depend less on conviction, than on the disposition to thwart and govern her. That strange, instinctive desire to tyrannise in outward circumstances, which comes like a disease to those who feel they have no sway over the

mind ; that determination to annoy, since they cannot influence ; that fierce hope to prove doubtful power, by forbidding, exacting, and compelling ; that angry impulse of a narrow soul which answers to the exertion of brute-strength in a school-boy, had too often been evident to Eleanor in her husband, not to teach her that all she could really rely upon, was that he would not care to oppose her in this matter ; that he would not think it " worth while."

The silent day wore on, while she thought of these things. The sun glowed over the fair blue hills, glistened among the trembling birch-trees by the lake, and slowly withdrew his farewell-smile to dawn upon other lands. The chill mist rose above the water. Eleanor thought of Clephane, and grew restless.

At length it was all but dark. Lady Macfarren was seated at a table at some distance from her sister-in-law, involved in

calculations about the farm, and the cattle they had been viewing.

"I declare it's getting that dark, I can hardly see the lines!" said she.

Then, as if Eleanor's heart had hitherto resisted the obvious fact that the day was going down, she started, and covering her face with her hands, she murmured:

"Oh, God! something *must* have happened, or they would have been home long ago."

"Happened? what should happen, and Sir Stephen and the keeper out with the boys? Really, Lady Penrhyn, you're a silly creature. They'll have waited to dine, and then they'll get Macpherson's dog-cart, and come home that way, and Clephane 'ill be spared any more of his walking and riding."

So saying, Lady Macfarren rang for lights; and for a while Eleanor curbed her fears to

this rational view of the delay. But as time wore on, again the wild alarm woke in her heart—irrepressible—unreprest. She rose, and walked to and fro by the windows of the large handsome room. She thought of the evening she first arrived; of the no-welcome of her hard fierce sister-in-law on that occasion. She could not tell why that evening returned to memory at that particular moment, unless it were that the absence of all sympathy oppressed her. Perhaps it was that, which made her also think of Margaret: oh, for Margaret's sweet voice and clasping hand! But Margaret was at Naples.

Eleanor stopped in her restless pacing up and down, and looked out into the night; she thought of that Italy she had never seen, and of what Margaret might be doing at that hour; she looked at the clear evening-star, and wondered if such stars looked down into the blue Bay of Naples, when Margaret and

David Stuart used to sing there together. Oh, Margaret, good, pious, cheerful, beautiful Margaret, what would Eleanor have given for one tender sentence from your lips! The star that she gazed on, grew large and trembled through her tears. She resumed her walk to and fro; she felt like a creature in a cage. Lady Macfarren looked up :

“Will you not be better sitting down, Lady Penrhyn? It’s impossible to count, or do anything, while you’re flitting to and fro in that way.”

“I beg your pardon: I feel uneasy; but indeed, as you say, they will all have dined, and the children will only need putting to bed when they come; so I’ll go to my own room, and wait there.”

As Eleanor passed through the hall to the staircase, she saw a group of servants at the open door; poor old Sandy was among them. He turned, and saw her; she paused wistfully :

"We thoct, mileddy, may be a' wasna richt; and there's a wee laddie gone up Donald Macpherson's way to know, 'gin Sir Stephen left the farm, whan he left it."

It was meant to soothe Eleanor, but it deepened her terror; even the servants evidently thought "something must have happened." The little lad returned; he said the message from the farm was, that Sir Stephen, and the boys hadn't left till very late, Master Clephane having laid down to rest; that they were to go home a different way, for Mr. Macpherson's car was lent to a neighbouring farmer; and that he thought they'd be very little after the messenger.

Eleanor was again relieved. She went to her dressing-room, and sate there with renewed patience. Two little silver mugs, the gift of Lord Peebles; some oat-cake and new milk, were set on a table to await the absentees. Their names were engraved on the cups, with many a careful flourish;

and Eleanor half smiled at the recollection of all the Airle's chuckling witticisms, about her hurry to discourage him from any wandering thoughts of matrimony, by bringing two male heirs at once into the family; and the expensive household his cousin Stephen would have to keep up, if that was the way Eleanor intended always to manage matters; and the good example she set the young matrons of the village; with sundry other kindly little fooleries; which wound up with presenting two cups, two corals, two curious old massive spoons, a "double set for the double quantity of company that had unexpectedly arrived at the Castle;" a joke which the Airle repeated to every one for at least two months after the advent of the twins, and always with the same happy little laugh at his own sprightliness.

CHAPTER XII.

EXPECTATION.

THEY would soon be home ! Eleanor's courage rose ; and with her courage, a wish to remonstrate with Sir Stephen, on his keeping two such young children out, till such a late, undue hour. It was perverse, after all the warnings Eleanor had given ; and when he knew Clephane was so delicate. She felt a wish to give a bolder and more reproachful greeting than she had yet ventured upon with her husband. He ought to be more considerate. Then she fell into a

train of reflection on the uselessness of reproaches; on the habit so common in the world, of making that a subject of battle and protest with a familiar connection, which would pass off with a polite apology in a stranger. How often the mere foolish fact of being kept waiting, or some equally trivial offence, leads on from one word to another, till a bitter and angry dispute is the result; when the two sentences, "I fear I am late," and "Do not think of it, I beg," would be probably all that would have passed, if the parties had not been *familiar* enough to quarrel. Why should we be ruder to our friends and relations, than to persons indifferent to us?

Eleanor resolved, wisely enough, to avoid such altercation. Reproaching Sir Stephen would not bring back the sunshine of a lost day, lift the dew off the hill, and the darkness off the lake, or undo the mischief of fatigue and cold, if mischief were already done. They would

probably come in chilled and tired ; and she would see them put to bed, and delay, till the next expedition, any observation on this past imprudence. She would not be peevish or irritable, because she had been anxious. If there could be no love between her and her husband, let there at least be peace.

It was well that she thought so. It was well that she schooled her heart to be at peace with her husband, for this was no time for bitterness. With a solemn stroke the knell of that anxiety had been tolled, for whose sake she would have been at strife with him ! Already, with a hurried trembling tread, the feet of the messenger of evil tidings passed swiftly over the dark heather that lay beyond the house.

Sit yet a little longer, poor mother, and wait in meek expectation to lift the hats from those shining curly heads, and see those rosy lips quaff from the little silver cups ; yet a little longer wait—and hope !

The message sent to allay Eleanor's anxiety by Donald Macpherson, was a compound of fact and fiction. The farmer heard with dismay of the non-appearance of Sir Stephen and his sons ; and no sooner had he dispatched the messenger, than he hastily mounted his horse and rode to the next farm, where he had lent the car that was to take them home.

" Archie," said the old man as he dismounted, " whar's Sir Stephen ?"

" Is he no at the hoose ? He suld ha been hame lang syne."

" By the Lord, Archie, something 'ill hae gane wrong ! Gude save us, and thae twa bonny lads—what 'ill be come to them."

" Hoot, mon, there'll be no harm come to them. The cairt was no in, and they walkit doon and just tuk boat at the auld boat-house, to cross the loch. The keeper's here with Master Clephane's pony, for Sir Stephen sent him back to bide here, for

maybe Mr. Pearson 'ud be glad o' him the morn."

"Mon, mon," said the old farmer dolefully, "there's a lad just been o'er the hill frae Glencarrick, that cam straight awa, and Sir Stephen was no at the hoose. It wadna tak four hour, nor the half o't, to tak them hame by the loch. O, mon ! Lord send they're a'safe !"

And the pious old Highlander lifted his bonnet from his grey hair, and looked tremblingly to heaven.

To saddle Clephane's pony, was the work of a few moments, and the two farmers rode together down to the lake side. There was no one in the boat-house : the old boatman had gone with Sir Stephen and the two boys ; but as they stood irresolute, not knowing where to turn : no creature within sight : no human habitation within two miles : they spied on a rise of the hill a woman frantically gesticulating to them : they rode up to her ; it was the boatman's wife. The poor old

creature clung shivering and shrieking to the mane of Macpherson's rough Shetland.

"Oo! ride roun' the head o' the loch, for the boat's gaed doon!" said she.

It was with difficulty they could get any connected account from her, but it appeared that the boat had been long unused, lying in the sun; that the boatman wanted to fill it to try, before they set sail, but that Sir Stephen was impatient, and said the boat was well enough; that they all got in, and went across rather more than half way, very slowly, for there was scarce any wind, and that not fairly with them—and then—the boat disappeared!

Yes, all had happened as she said. Sir Stephen, already worried by the difficulty with Clephane and his pony, and angry with his sister for quitting the party, spoke with savage impatience to the old boatman, and assisted, himself, in shoving off the boat, and putting up the tiny sail. At first they

did well enough ; then the boat lagged, and went uneasily through the water ; then it became evident that she leaked considerably ; a plank must have started.

Sir Stephen put his hand under a rotten board in the flooring, and tore up the planks under his feet.

“ Bale it out—bale out the water,” shouted he.

Alas ! the water was rushing in at more than one crevice. The light wind played mockingly round them ; the sunset lay rosy and still on land and water ; the long sweet wooded shore stretched far away, edged with a golden gleam and a fringe of shadows.

Oh ! God, were they to die so ?

The old boatman’s teeth chattered with fear. Sir Stephen hastily undressed ; he measured the bright sheet of water with his eye. It was not impossible to swim to land ; it could not be more than a mile and a half : he had

swum more than that distance for a bet, and he was to swim now for his life. His life ! ay, and his children's lives. No, not his children—a child : he felt it could be but one—it was a chance even with that one. The clinging weight of a child of six years old, to a man swimming, is heavy odds.

Oh ! terrible moment—oh, hour of strange and insupportable horror ! And the water sucking the boat down, and no time to deliberate—no time for anything but quick instinct. It all passed through his mind in less time than it takes to read ; as he tore off his clothes, and the heavy boat, water-logged, rocked under him. His eyes looked wildly on Clephane ; with pity, with horror ; the pale little face was marble white ; a soft strange appealing smile came over it.

“ Never mind me, papa ; save Freddy ; the boatman will take me.”

“ Oh Clephane !—oh, my boy !—oh, God ! your mother !”

But a wild scream from Frederic, caused the father to turn. His lovely favourite had just comprehended, in the gush of water that filled the boat, the full extent of his danger. He sprang towards his father! There was no time to undo the fastenings of his dress: his head was bare. Sir Stephen pulled off his shoes, and swung him on his naked back.

“Put your arms round my neck, Fred; don’t be frightened—don’t let go.”

They were in the water!

As the boat sank, Sir Stephen heard the voice of Clephane. He had even then a consciousness of dreading to hear another bitter scream, such as Frederic had given a minute before. He heard no scream, but he heard the voice of the child in a loud, plaintive tone; it said:

“Our Father, which art in Heaven!”

He saw its face for a moment; not looking for help—looking upwards; he saw its

hand, trying to grasp something, some rope or portion of the sail, something attached to the boat. He saw the old boatman, as in a dream, take the boy in his arms; he saw nothing more—he was striking out for his life, and Frederic's life.

Give him strength—oh, God! He so strong, he so proud of his strength! Will it ever enable him to reach the shore?

Loosen your clutch dear frightened, childish arms, closed so tight round your father's throat while he pants for breath! Do not be terrified; do not shriek in his ear, as he breasts the water with an effort; getting wearied; do not wail out the words "Clephane—my darlin' Clephane," like a sound of doom over the lake! Be quiet, dear boy; that's right; don't fear; hold firm—we shall do it yet.

The shore!—the dim shore—the dim, distant shore; it is nearer—he can distinguish cottages, though they gleam but white specks.

Oh, help ! oh, help ! he faints ! No—he rests on the water. Is he to live ? is he to die ? What a weight, this child—this poor bewildered child ! Do not kiss your father's neck with chill wet lips, poor little one ! It torments, it unmans, even him ! Be quiet, do not fear : hold firm.

Swim on—strike out ! He can see the windows of the cottages, sparkling like jewels in the sunset light. The shore is nearing fast. It is certainly nearing ! But Sir Stephen is getting very faint. That magnificent athletic form strains every muscle for life, for dear life ! Will he or Death win the race ?

Swim on—strike out—rest a little. His eyes are getting dim ; the rolling as of distant thunder is in his ears ; his head and shoulders sink too low, and his child is choking with the water ; its wet dress flaps on its face ; the father is getting feeble, very feeble. He does not see the shore ; he sees nothing real ;

he sees his home, as in a vision, and Eleanor getting the news. Is he drowning?

What, what was that sound? that shout, that wild, dim echo from some living world of safety, that smites him in his death hour? Where does it come from? What has it to do with him? They see him—they see him from the cottages! Help him! save him! even if you can't swim, wade to him—fling ropes—get a boat—get him in—help! He is so near now you can surely reach him by the hair, by the child's dress; by the knotted handkerchief: seize and help!

It is done; he is on the land once more; among wet, struggling, dripping, breathless men. He does not see them; he does not hear them; he does not feel the shingled beach against his torn and bleeding skin—that stranded majestic statue of a man. He lies motionless—senseless—exhausted: not dead—no, not dead! God is very merciful. Untie the little child; unclasp

its arms. No, no, carry them both in together, to the warmth of the fire in one of the cottages; chafe him well, and lift the child away. He sees—he speaks! he knows one of the men. Stand away—let him speak to the man he knows.

“We’ve had a sad accident. Take care of the child! Ah! Frederic, we’ve had a tussle for it; we must put a little life into you now, my boy!” The father smiles a faint smile.

Put a little life into him! Put a little life into him! Why are they all so still and sad? Put the long wet hair off his lovely little face! His eyes are not quite closed, nor yet open. He has fainted, with the chill washing over of the waters so often, in the long struggling way. Chafe him as he lies on the knees of the cottar’s wife, his beautiful limbs freed now from the cold soaked dress; naked and free as the limbs of the strong man, who saved the child’s life and his own by that feat of unrivalled swimming! Chafe

him, and be careful of him, and wrap him up warm and softly, that he may be carried to his poor mother and comfort her! Why are you all so slack? What ails you all? Stand by; let the father look at his child!

Well?

His child is dead. His child is a little lovely corpse!

Both his children are dead: the one he sought to save, and the one he left to die. Both! And they tell it to Eleanor; and she comprehends what has fallen upon her that fearful day!

In the morning she was the mother of living children, and in the evening of departed souls!

CHAPTER XIII

SORROW.

IF any one had told Eleanor that she would have survived her children's death, she would not have believed the prophecy. None of us know what we can live past, till we have proved it. God sends strange strength to carry us on from one great trial to the next that is reserved for us. We live through them, and past them; so that to the world, they seem over; so that strangers cheerfully observe to each other, that we "seem quite ourselves again." The loud weeping, the

starts of pain, the bitter yearnings for the past, the sick shrinkings from the future, are put by, like funereal garments: they no longer prove to the casual observer that we have sustained some dear loss. We bear unequally, it is true: body and mind have accidental differences. One person will die of a slight wound that scarcely leaves a visible scar; and another may be crushed on a railway, miraculously rescued, the broken limbs bandaged, the tortured frame restored to action and health, and life set going in the human machine as before. One person will sink under a sorrow, that at a different time perhaps, or in different circumstances, would have seemed comparatively light; and another will survive what seems a very martyrdom of woe. The human heart is very strong: strong to love, strong to hope, but above all strong to endure.

So Eleanor lived past it all! Past the first dreadful hours, when the news seemed

as if it could not be real ; as if some dreadful nightmare held possession of her senses, from which, if she did but take patience, she must wake at last. Past that scraping and gnawing of the heart by little trivial things—the leaping of Frederic’s squirrel in its cage, watching her with bright brown eyes, as it had watched the little child, for food or play ; the singing of Clephane’s birds, with a loud thrilling song that seemed to cleave her very soul in two ; the coming out of spring primroses in the woodlands where they had played ; all the life that still went on in the world, strong and fragile, when death only was for them ; death, and the still, silent, changeless grave !

Past the blank cheerless mornings, whose sunrise no longer brought their merry good-morrow into her room ! Past the solemn, dreary nights, when she lay in her bed, moaning and sobbing for those who slept in the churchyard ! Past the haunted fanciful

period of grief, when standing in the dim evening light, it almost seemed as if two little white phantoms would flit across the lawn and along the gravel walk to meet her; as if some laughing voice would start up in the nursery, where she sat with her straining eyes resting on the accustomed furniture and moveless broken toys, and bid her know it was all a miserable dream.

Past the mystery of a tempted despair; when demons seemed to speak to her soul of the strange fate by which all those she loved were to die by this death of drowning. David Stuart—her boys—why not join them? Why not also die so? Under that cold sheet of water was rest. Under, was rest!

She lived past it all. The time came that Eleanor ceased from weeping. The crash and tumult of grief's storm was over; the wail of its winds was hushed; the sun rose again with the common light of day; and the tossed and beaten wreck of her most

cherished hope, lay still and stranded on the shore of usual life.

The father also lamented; though for a briefer space. With savage grief; cursing his own folly about the boat that was not fit to use; cursing the hard fate of his merry loving child. Flinging himself prone on the heather over which those little light steps had followed him, and weeping there with loud convulsive sobs; lying for hours silent with folded arms and his face to the earth, so that when he rose and strode away over the hill, the weight of his form lay marked out like the lair of a couchant beast. Lamenting! lamenting after his own fashion. Wondering why his children were born, to be doomed to die so young and so suddenly; murmuring against heaven, and seeing no pleasure upon earth. And then it passed by—like the grief of a creature whose cubs had been destroyed.

Even Lady Macfarren grieved for the two children; hard as she was, she was human;

and when the great terrible news came ; and she knew that her brother had been in peril of his life, and that his boys had perished, her soul was shaken even to tears. She had a feeling too, in her regret, which was independent of tenderness. She saw her brother once more without an heir to his name and estates. No other child had blest the marriage which she viewed with such displeasure, and though Clephane's life had always seemed a thing little to be counted upon, she had surely reckoned that Frederic would inherit, in the far future, the accumulated riches and consequence of the family. Now, as she looked at the sad pale delicate mother, her mind misgave her as to that future ; gloom and dissatisfaction mingled with and overbore more feminine regret ; nor was it without a certain superstitious sympathy, that she heard the villagers and simple Highland folk, speak mysteriously again of the prophecy that there never should be an heir to Castle

Penryhn in the direct line. There had not been for three generations. Her brother had inherited Castle Penryhn from one cousin, and he would inherit the earldom of Peebles from another.

They were at the castle. A cold, damp autumn day had gradually thickened over to drizzling rain, and Eleanor who was beyond the park, hastily retraced her steps, to regain the shelter of the house. The shortest way to return, was by the Lodge, and the side gate had been left open by her desire when she passed through. She felt weak and ill, and her feet lifted slowly over the drifted leaves which made a silent pathway through the wood. Her limbs ached, her head felt dizzy, she doubted whether she could go much further without fainting. She looked up at the Lodge, bosomed in pleasant shrubs, and bright with dahlias and autumnal flowers; she felt that her choice lay between resting there or dropping in the park road. She

turned and ascended the little pathway to the porch. There she sate down ; overcome alike by the sick faintness of memory, which recalled the day she had questioned Bridget, and by physical indisposition. The door of the Lodge stood open, but she did not venture in ; she heard voices, Sir Stephen's voice and Bridget Owen's. Then she would have risen to depart, but could not. Slantways, she could see into the pretty parlour, with its deep carpeted bay window where Sir Stephen's dogs lay crouched, and where he and Bridget were seated. For she was sitting, that woman ; sitting by Sir Stephen's side, her hand in his ; Eleanor was spell-bound ! She saw, she could not choose but see ; she heard, she could not choose but hear. Sir Stephen was speaking of his lost children.

"Clephane," said he, "if it had only been Clephane, I might have got over it—he was always a weed, poor fellow : one did'nt build upon him. But that Frederic should

go !—such a strong, hearty, merry little fellow !
Oh ! my boy—oh ! my Fred !”

He struck his clenched hand violently on the table, and almost at the same moment laid his head down there, with a burst of convulsive weeping. Then Eleanor saw Bridget—saw her as if in a dream. The young Welchwoman rose impetuously ; with an echo of his own vehemence ; with a passionate pity in her dark eyes and crimson cheek ; rose and flung her arms wildly round his neck ; rained kisses on his hair, his clenched hand, his half-hidden face.

“ And oh !” sobbed she, “ do you think I a’nt sorry for you ? Do you think I a’nt sorry for his mother ? Do you think I would’nt bring back that poor lamb, if I could, with a cup of my own heart’s blood ? I would—I would ; though you know you deceived me when you first brought me here. I’d bring him back with my marriage ring, if I had one ; I’d bring him back with any-

thing I had to give, but the life of one of my own! Oh! don't moan him more—take comfort—kiss me—don't moan!”

And suddenly, as if to answer the wild tenderness of her manner, Sir Stephen leaned back with wide-spread arms, and caught her to his heart—caught her and held her in his fervent locked embrace—as he had held Eleanor the day she fainted at Aspendale—and as he did so, he exclaimed—

“I would I had never had him, Bridget! I would I had never owned anything, my girl, but you and yours; and if I could make you Lady Penrhyn to-morrow, by G—d. I'd do it!”

Eleanor heard it; she heard him say he wished he had never had wife or child; she heard him say, that if he could, he would make the woman his wife he then held in his arms; and who was comforting him—comforting him for the loss of Eleanor's own child!

Oh ! life how strange and heavy are some of your trials !

She rose : a cold dull dread of their coming out and finding her, gave her the sort of strength which in an evil dream enables us to fly from some overshadowing horror ; to fly without escaping—but without being overtaken.

The day was worse ; the branches bowed and swung in the storm as she passed and the drifting rain beat across the path, drenching her with its hard cold shower. The late roses shook their wet scattered leaves on the stone steps of the terrace, as she ascended them ; and when she closed the door, she heard the wind moan round the house with a dismal whistling sound ; precursor of the long night of rain and wind that was to follow.

The late roses were all gone, and the frost was on the ground, before Eleanor again beheld the external aspect of nature. She had

lain ill after that day—very ill—with one of those long low fevers to which she was subject. Did the heart of the woman at the Lodge, the woman her husband loved, beat with the hope that Providence would make possible the declaration of his lips? Did Sir Stephen desire it to become possible? It seemed not; he seemed sorry for her; but she had heard—she could not forget what she had heard; and she did not want to live—only we die, all of us, at God's appointed time.

Eleanor lived; but the little Hindoo Ayah, who had been her servant for so many years, fell ill about this time and died. Since the loss of the children (the second generation she had nursed) she had wandered about dejectedly; and after many months; often being found sitting at the foot of the stairs that led to the deserted shut-up nursery; often being heard crying, or crooning little monotonous Hindoo songs to herself; she shrivelled up like a little willow-leaf

before winter ; and dropped as quietly in the grave as that leaf to the ground.

So Eleanor remained at Castle Penrhyn without any of those who had known her in early years, except old Sandy. Her mother and the Ayah were dead, Godfrey at sea, Emma in her own little home at Ryde, Margaret in Italy. She lived alone ; and she felt very lonely. She knew that Sir Stephen went every day to the Lodge. She knew that the pretty boy went to school in Edinburgh with other gentlemen's sons ; and that when he came home, though he never came up to the Castle, he would join Sir Stephen out shooting, to carry his game bag or perform some other trivial task ; and she had seen Sir Stephen pat him kindly and familiarly on the shoulder when they met ; but that would have been nothing, if she had not heard, what she could not forget.

Many young wives will say, why did

Eleanor bear this? They are very fond of saying: "Oh! if my husband were to strike me, I would leave him that moment." "If my husband were false to me, I would not remain under the shadow of his roof." But the question sometimes is, under the shadow of what other roof they are to sit; since they cannot pitch a Bedouin tent in the world's desert, nor cross their own thresholds to climb up the door-step of other people's houses. They must have friends, home, money, a protection of some sort, somewhere to go to. Eleanor had none of these things; and perhaps it would be well for many a young wife in her anger—ay, even in her just legitimate anger against the husband she was vowed to at the altar—if she had no other refuge to count upon, but was compelled by the very force of friendless circumstance, to await the working out of God's will in her hard destiny, by her own fireside. I do not say it would be well, without

exception ; but in a vast majority of cases it would be well. Ties might thus remain fast which never were meant to be broken. Partings, might not take place, which are made irrevocable in the hurry of anger. Partings which even when they seem to lookers-on to be eagerly acquiesced in, often tug and strain at the hearts of those who have made them. Pride and wrath and self-vindication, would not work with mistaken kindness from others and a blind sort of justice, to ruin instead of redress ; nor Margaret's lessons of tolerance be learned too late in life, to do aught but make us sigh to think how much better some we love might have guided their course, if tolerance had been the first, instead of the last lesson, their souls were willing to be taught.

CHAPTER XIV.

DESTINY BETHINKS HERSELF OF TIB.

THAT virtue is sooner or later rewarded, is one of those grand truisms which we admit without disputing. There are, indeed, those who would quaintly translate the proverb "Virtue is its own reward," into the meaning that it shall never obtain any recompense beyond a pleased self-consciousness; but I cling to the old belief (in the teeth of all evidence to the contrary), that something pleasant accrues to people for

well-doing. I therefore hold that when destiny bethought herself of Tib Christison, and gave her the chief desire of her heart, she was rewarding that patient spinster for her many virtues.

Tib's long courtship had succeeded ! She was Countess of Peebles : she was the Airle's Lady. Vain was Lady Macfarren's rage : the green bud of spinsterhood was spread into a glorious tulip. She patronized Lady Macfarren ; her humility had vanished heaven knows where ; to that limbo where the vanished humiliations of many spinsters, old and young, go when they have outwitted the circle of blind relatives they dwelt amongst. She was no longer humble : she "knew her position." She was Dagoness to the Dagon in the gouty chair : she was head of the family ! Tib ! Tib, who had been under the very hindmost heel of the family ; Tib, who had danced reels, and matched sixpenny ribbands, and slept in the garret at word of command !

She was Dagoness: and she did not even condescend to take the second place in that capacity; but carried herself with a pride like Wolsey's, when he wrote of his King—" *Ego et Rex meus!*" A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: her price is above rubies. Oyez, oyez! ye relatives of Lord Peebles, be humble and vigilant; for Tib seals with the coronet she has fished for so long. And oh! dear me, how short Tib's memory grew, as to which of the Glencarrick group had been her friends, and which merely acquaintances! How infinitely more familiar did she appear to have been with the Duchess of Lanark and Lady Margaret, and even with young Lady Penrhyn, than with her superseded patroness, Lady Macfarren!

It would have done your heart good to see Tib. If ever fine feathers made fine birds, Tib's court plume was composed of them. How she swam past the Queen!

What could the Queen do for Tib (unless Her Majesty were to abdicate in her favour) more than Tib had already done for herself, by her own unassisted exertions? Tib was intoxicated with success: Tib would not have envied the Emperor of Russia on his throne. Nothing but death could now take the Airle from her: and even that melancholy event could not take away her title. Tib was a Countess! Oh, you poor old maids, of Edinburgh, London, Paris, and the other principal cities of Europe, what meagre cats you are in comparison! Fall down and worship Tib, for she is a very goddess of old maids!

How she forgot her brother altogether; how she flouted her slavish little mother; how she cut all her humble friends, is not to be told. Nor how, the very day of the wedding, while her mother was yet weeping for joy in the best bedroom of Douglas's Hotel, out of which her daughter the Countess had

gone rustling down stairs in a magnificent white *gros-de-Naples* pelisse, she said to the Airle :

“ My mother has been fishing sair for an invite to Peebles Pairk ; but I’m for putting it off a little, for I’d wish her to know her place at once, and then there’ll be no fashious doings afterwards, when we’ll be having grand company at the pairk.”

The Airle smiled awkwardly. He felt,—through all his flannels,—something chill smite his heart, at this proof of his bride’s capacity for ambition, and incapacity for home affections.

“ Tib,” said he seriously, “ your mother’s a kind little body, and I assure you that for my part”—

“ Oh, it’s a’ settled noo, dear Lord Peebles ; and I’d thank ye to ca’ me Tabitha, since we’re married ; for Tib’s just an unsightly name, and I’ll have nane o’ it.”

The honeymoon was a period of great

leisure with Tib. She employed it in writing many long letters, sealed with a well cut and deeply-impressed coronet, surmounting the name of Tabitha. She also read (many times in the day for the first three weeks) the announcement of her own marriage in the papers.

“Mortimer James George, Earl of Peebles, to Tabitha Emily, daughter of the late Peter Christison, Esq., of Dunleath;” followed by a description of the finery she wore; the name of the French milliner who made it up; the company who assisted at the ceremony; and a list of the bridesmaids who followed in her train. One Miss Bella Mackray had formerly been promised this honour, when both were still young, but Tib’s august prospects forbade such an indignity.

“It was aye ’greed on, when we were young lassies,” pleaded the sorrowful friend of the promoted one.

"Well, you're no a young lassie noo," observed Tib with a short laugh.

"Deed, then, I'm as young for a bridesmaid, as you for a bride," tartly responded the irate spinster ; but her heart immediately softening to her old playmate, she wiped a tear from the corner of her eye, and added "however, I'm just glad and thankfu' for you're gude fortune, Tib ; and I'll come to the wedding, though I'll no come as bridesmaid, and I'll come and see ye in ye're braw hoose afterwards."

With this last proof of friendship, Tib could have willingly dispensed. From the first it was her intention to be more than ordinarily "select;" and when the homely companion of less elevated days, put the threat of a friendly visit into execution, her reception was discouraging. Patiently Miss Bella Macray sate through two or three morning calls, which she imagined divided

her from "a cantie crack" with the Countess ; smiling, or putting in a little observation now and then, if people turned their heads her way. At length they were alone, and Bella Mackray, giving a glad swing to her reticule, and drawing her chair nearer to that of her friend, said cheerfully :

"Noo then, we can talk."

But most irate were the feelings that swelled in the heart of the Airle's lady. That Bella should dare to come at all, without having first taken the pleasure of the Dagoness as to the interview, was bad enough ; but that she should be so ignorant of all the rules of fashionable society, or affect so presumptuous an intimacy, as to "sit out" the ladies of the Great World, who had called in the interval, was too monstrous ! The conscious importance of her position ; her four footmen, her velvet pile carpets, her satin curtans, her buhl book-cases, her sleek horses, her big carriage covered with armorial

bearings, her diamonds, and her Earl, all rose to Tib's memory in one crowded instant, and caused her almost to burst with indignation.

"What d'ye want?" said she, almost fiercely, to her former friend and companion. "What can ye want, that ye sit my visitors out in this extraordinary fashion, Miss Bell?"

The other fired up in a moment; and after giving a surprised stare of amazement and mortification, she said:

"'Deed, then, Tib, I cam' just to see you. I want naething o' ye. Want, indeed! I thank God and my gude father, I'm so weel set above want, that I'll no be obleeged, like some folk, to marry wi' an auld nightcap and an armfu' of flannels."

The wrath that flashed in Tib's keen green eyes, warned the quondam bridesmaid to beat an immediate retreat, which she did somewhat ignominiously. The great house

door was shut behind her, by the great fat porter who could have swallowed the Earl as the whale did Jonah, with a resounding grandeur; and she pattered away on foot, like a poor little mouse that had been driven out in the act of stealing crumbs of cheese; though in point of fact she had, as she said, wanted nothing except to see her magnificent friend, in her magnificent house, under her new magnificent circumstances.

She had seen all she was to see of that magnificence, for when Tib gave crumbs of cheese, or crumbs of comfort, it was not to such mice and "small deer" as Bella Mackray. No, Tib fed lions. Lions and tigers. Not those tamed by Van Amburgh, but those belonging to the purlieus of Hyde Park. Tib had one real advantage on her entrance into London society, that she had lived in Edinburgh at a time when its circles, always highly educated and informed, were especially

intellectual. In Tib's early youth she had known great minds; men who were landmarks of their time; monarchs not "of all they surveyed," but of all they "reviewed;" and though that debateable land has been since subdivided and shaken, like other great kingdoms, enough of the *prestige* of knowing those great names remained to Miss Tib.

So when she found any new clever man wandering about the sandy deserts of good society, she baited a trap for him with one of these names; or she lassoed and brought him home; and thus she tamed many of the principal lions of the day, and brought them indeed to behave less like lions than like tame elephants, of whom it is said that they may be trained after a while to decoy one another.

For the clever men meeting other clever men at Peebles House, thought that mansion very agreeable; and had a vague notion (not altogether unfounded), that Tib must be

very clever herself, to collect so many clever men about her. And though Tib was very ignorant and illiterate (how ignorant, nobody ever knew but Tib), she shewed herself to be wiser in her generation than the children of light; and people greatly respected Tib, and Tib's French cook; and ate Tib's dinners whenever she asked them.

And Tib was never known in all her life, to omit any one the world had remarked; or to single out any one for notice, not previously remarkable; or to give one disinterested invitation for the mere pleasure of seeing a friend; or to do anything without an *arrière pensée*; and Tib throve prodigiously.

And in one respect Tib behaved as big boys do at school, who avenge upon little boys what they themselves endured while in the position of fags; for Tib took especial pleasure in fagging and tyrannising over old maids; insomuch that it was quite pleasant to watch her, and she had

more toad-eaters than any one would well believe. Only one old maid having trod in Tib's own footsteps, and married a Duke, was pronounced to have been the dear friend and companion of her youth—and took brevet rank accordingly.

And when the London season was over, and the flock of lions was quietly dispersing, and going to prowl singly or in lesser groups in the country, Tib took out a little gold and vellum memorandum book, and arranged who she would receive, and where she would visit. And among the houses to which Tib naturally offered to go, was Penrhyn Castle; and young Lady Penrhyn replied, that Sir Stephen was going to Wales for a couple of months, but that she believed Lady Macfarren would be at the Castle, and that the Duke and Duchess of Lanark would also pay them a visit; and so would Lady Margaret, who was shortly expected to return from Italy; that she did not know exactly

when that would be ; but that she would be very happy to receive Tib and Lord Peebles meanwhile, whenever it suited them. And it suited Tib to go there about the middle of the month of September.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HOUR OF GLOOM.

EARLY in September, before Tib or Lady Macfarren or any of her visitors had arrived, when she was yet all alone in the large lonely house, which no longer echoed in its dim corridors the merry laugh and pattering steps of children, Eleanor was sitting in the window of the sunny little bower-room, once allotted to Tib when the Castle was full of company ; the room in which Tib had found the copy of verses she showed to

Lady Macfarren ; and the scraps of sketches, and patterns for arbours and trellis-work, and designs for school-house and cottages, and rules for a general village oven where the poor might bake, and other evidences of the employment of Eleanor's leisure.

Tib would have found nothing now. She might have ferreted in vain ; no trace of occupation was there. The housemaid who arranged the room, found it day by day as orderly as she left it ; no scraps of clipping and cutting from mounted drawings, littered the carpet ; no light tissue-paper floated through the window, giving her the trouble of running down the great staircase, and begging Sandy to see if what had flown into the garden was of any consequence. Eleanor's occupation was gone, like Othello's. The main-springs of life were broken.

Nothing is more common than to hear it said to persons in affliction or depression, " Oh !

but you should employ yourself; you should resort to some of your usual occupations: I really wonder that you, who have so many resources, should allow your mind to sink in this way." Alas! our resources are of very little service in hours of *real* affliction! The soul is palsied, not the hands; we cannot employ ourselves if we would. There is an energy in happiness, that the wretched cannot feel. To what end should we labour? What does anything signify? Why should we shake the sands in the monotonous course of time? Let the hours go by; let them bear them with us, or leave us behind in the grave; what care we? Only let there be peace and silence; no turmoil round us; no exertion expected from us—*no* exertion—even that which we were once willing to make for good and holy objects!

This is a diseased state of mind; this is despair; this is what has been felt probably, in a greater or less degree, by many who

will read these pages. It was the state of Eleanor's mind at the time I am describing. She could do nothing; she did not attempt to do anything; she desired nothing; she feared nothing: if her heart roused itself at all, it did so on those days when the post brought a letter from Margaret, at Naples; but even then it was but a faint rally. Even Margaret's sweet musical sentences had lost their power, in some measure. Bright, happy Margaret; beloved and welcomed at Naples, cherished by the old Duchess, yearned for at home by her noble-hearted brother; looked up to and revered like some shrined saint, by her little daughter—by her daughter, who did not die like Eleanor's children nor even pine with a sick life like Clephane; but lived and smiled, a rosy copy of her lovely mother, and sat in the sunshine of love and happiness all day long; oh! how should Margaret understand what was working at Eleanor's heart?

So Eleanor thought ; and therefore in her letters she would not speak of it. But she was wrong. Sympathy is the child of tenderness, not of experience. Those who are quick to feel, will sympathise with a sorrow they have never experienced ; and those who are slow to feel, will be no nearer sympathy when they have apparently endured a similar grief, than they were before. Margaret had never lost a child ; but not the less did her bright eyes brim with tears when she saw children at play who reminded her of Eleanor's. She had never been unloved and lonely, but she could guess from the strength of her own love what such a blank might be. If she had seen Eleanor, she would have comprehended all at a glance ; but she did not see her ; she only read her quiet letters ; and she wrote to her of her schools, her plans, her garden, and her poor ; hoping that her dejection was soothed and broken by employment, and knowing well that grief

must run its course: that it must, according to the beautiful, untranslatable expression in Schiller, where Wallenstein laments for Max, be "grieved down" by Time, before it ends.

So Eleanor sat idle and listless at the window of the little bower-room. She had lost her resemblance to the picture at Lansdowne House. The restlessness, the bitter energy, the *youth* of her sorrow were gone. It was a passive face—a face that would have told a dreary tale to physiognomists. No kind busy little Mrs. Christison came hurrying up stairs as in the old days at Glencarrick, to try and alter its expression by homely sympathy. No fierce sister-in-law reproved. No friend comforted. God and his good angels alone saw that face, in the holy autumnal light; and He alone judges when the cup of human sorrow shall be pronounced to be full.

Through Eleanor's mind the dreary reflection had just passed, that at least *suffering* was

over for her in this world; that nothing more could come now, but death—death not called for with a passionate impatient apostrophe, as in the verses Tib had read, but waited for with a very real calm. For to the coming of death Eleanor felt indifferent, as to all other things.

It was at this moment that old Sandy entered, after twice knocking at the door unheard. Eleanor turned her head; she thought some directions about the garden were required, but she was startled as she looked on the old man. His face was white as ashes; his weak eyes looked as though a burning light were held behind them.

“Gracious Heaven, Sandy! what ails you?”

“Hech, Mileddy! heh! there’s ane come wi’ a letter for your Laddyship, and it’s entrusted to my han’, Mileddy—to my han’.”

The idea of some terrible accident crossed

Eleanor's imagination. She had had evil news before—what now?

“What is it, Sandy? Pray speak out. Pray give me the letter. I am not strong, and it makes me feel faint and ill, to be kept in suspense. Has Sir Stephen—give me the letter.”

The old man still retained it a moment, in his trembling grasp.

“Miledy, it's no a letter frae Sir Stephen, nor any ways frae hame. It's a letter frae furrin' pairts.”

“Oh, my poor Margaret!” shrieked Eleanor, as she started from her seat.

Sandy held her by her dress.

“Miledy, ye'll forgie an auld man, an' hear him. Tak this letter; it's no frae Italy, but Ameriky. He's no deed, Miledy—Mr. Stuart's no deed! It's a' richt; and when he dees, there's no man 'll speak ill o' his banes. Here's the letter, Miledy; and a man brocht it and speered for me, and



wadna come in, but waited for me at the Ludge. I gaed and tuk it frae him, and he's to ca' back in an hoor—up frae the village, Mileddy—to speak wi' yere Leddyskip; and, eh, Mileddy, I'm just daft wi' the news; just daft—clean daft.”

There was little occasion for Sandy to give this just description of his own state, for he seemed indeed in a condition little short of madness. He snapt his fingers, he danced, he wept, he stood still and trembled; and finally, as the marble face of his beautiful mistress turned upon him from glancing over the letters, with eyes that did not seem to see, and white parted lips that did not seem to breathe—he dropped on his knees in a paroxysm of terror, and exclaimed:

“Oo, Mileddy! dinna dee—dinna dee till ye've heard a'; dinna dee, for I tauld it just as I was bid to tell it. Gude savè us, and keep us! Tak a sup o' water, and dinna dee.”

Eleanor did not faint ; she only retreated slowly to her seat in the window, and read the letter again. Then she asked Sandy when the messenger who brought it, said he would return ; and desired that when he came he might be shown into the breakfast-room, and that refreshments might be put there, and she would come and speak with him ; and then, and not till then, Eleanor burst into tears, and held out her hand to poor old Sandy, which he took, weeping and trembling, and praying to the Lord for her peace and comfort, and for “a’ blessins to be shoored doon on her by nicht an’ by day ;” but she did not hear his words, for her eyes were riveted once more on the open letter in her hand.

Read the letter, Eleanor, in the old, well-known writing, unseen for eight long years ! read the missive from the long-lost friend in a far away land, whose death you lamented

in vain. Life is not empty, though full of pain; life is not hopeless, though full of loss. Live now; live if only to answer that letter; that long letter, making clear the darkness and misery of the past. Live! there *is* a future, even on this side the grave! Live to hear from him again! Live to question the friend to whom he entrusted this missive, and who has stood in his presence—looked in his eyes—touched his hand—at their farewell-greeting, only a few weeks since, when he left him in America! Live for the vague, faint, possible hope (since he is not dead) of seeing him once more, before you surrender up your life. Life! which half-an-hour ago seemed so valueless, that you cared not when the summons should come that would end it!

The letter was indeed a strange one. In the hour of his meditated suicide, David

Stuart had been rescued by a feeble hand. Old Mr. Fordyce had been attending a dying woman in the village all night, and crossed that part of the park by the roaring Linn, as his nearest way home, just as day began to break. He was in time to cry out—to clutch—and to save. The explanation between the two friends was terrible—was miserable; but the old clergyman forgot not mercy in his teaching. He argued with David in the name of that Creator into whose presence the sinner would have madly rushed.

“Mr. Stuart,” said he, solemnly, “I have just come from a sinner’s death-bed; the death-bed of a woman you may remember, as bearing a very bad character in the village. I received her confession; she admitted having poisoned her husband; and destroyed, and buried in the wood, a child she always affirmed to have been carried off by the

gipsies. You, have gone through the storm of life this night ; and I, the storm of death. I sate for hours listening to that woman's feeble savage shrieks to God for mercy ; for *time*, if it was but one day ! I never, in all my experience as a clergyman, heard such terrified craving for life. She died with starting eyes, and clenched hands ; choking ; cursing ; wailing ; struggling ; and earnestly I prayed with her, for most unfit was she to die. It pleased God nevertheless to take her as she was ; no time was granted her ; no other day of delay and respite dawned for her perishing soul ; in the dark night it was required of her ! Mr. Stuart, as I stepped into the fresh morning light, out of that dreadful death-chamber, I prayed for all sinners ; that we might all have time to repent and prepare. I little thought I was then praying for you. You would fling away your life as worthless—as useless.

Man, the life God gave you, He will find a purpose for, though it be but the purpose of repentance ! Kneel down, and thank Him for it. After the scene I have witnessed this night, the fact that life remains to you—though nothing else were granted—seems of itself, to me, an unspeakable blessing. Up ! and face the future, whatever it may be. You have defrauded the widow and the orphan ; your life is theirs ; if it suffice but to win back a tithe of what they have lost through you, you will not have lived in vain.”

As a light, trembling like a star at the summit of some hideous winding cavern, shewing a way out into a world of upper light and air, to a lost traveller—so fell the words of the good old man, on the soul of the miserable and despairing David Stuart. Before they parted, Mr. Fordyce, producing an inkhorn from his pocket, wrote a few hurried lines to a merchant at Quebec, intro-

ducing Stuart by the assumed name of Lindsay, and entreating his friend, if possible, to recommend him for employment; as one who had had misfortunes, but was very able and intelligent. It was agreed that he should write to Mr. Fordyce once a year, and that the fact of his being yet alive, should remain a secret buried for ever between them. A secret it was doomed indeed to be; for the agitation, fatigue, and horror of the night, produced in the wearied old man, that attack of paralysis, from which he never rallied even enough to tell Eleanor, (as he apparently had endeavoured to do), this great alleviation of the pain she experienced.

David Stuart learned from the English papers, the death of the gentle incumbent of Aspendale, and the marriage of Sir Stephen Penrhyn with his ward. He had no reason to think it other than a happy lot. He remembered all the rational praises Lady Margaret had bestowed on Eleanor's suitor,

all the explanations Sir Stephen himself had given in his letter of proposal. He treated the idea of any other attachment on Eleanor's part very lightly. Poor child! she had been too nervous to declare on whom her choice had rested, but the preference could hardly disturb her future destiny, which had been grounded on the ball-room acquaintance of a single season in London, and had escaped the observation of Lady Margaret. For had not Margaret expressly declared that the nearest approach to preference that Eleanor had shown, was to Sir Stephen himself? He was easy, therefore, as to Eleanor's fate. The burden of reproach and bitter shame was all he had to bear, and he carried it with him night and day.

The merchant to whom Mr. Fordcye had addressed him, was engaged in speculations in the fur trade. The employment he offered David was to traffic for furs with the Indians of the interior. It was a life of

danger, hardship, and distress. David made it also one of penury. He denied himself all that was not a bare subsistence; he lived on just what would keep life in him—that life which he had sworn to Mr. Fordyce to preserve, as far as human care could preserve it. During the brief and accidental inter-communion with comrades and countrymen in the way of his trade, he was sneered at and shunned, as one unnaturally stingy and uncompanionable. But his time was passed principally among savages, whose dealings were confined to a few interpreted words, in the management of his employer's interests. That employer was satisfied; and his profits were beyond his most sanguine calculations. But what were profits in the fur trade, to a man who had risked and lost a fortune like Eleanor's?

The events of real life are often stranger than fiction. In a far-away settlement, in a log cabin, with no companion but a weakly

had, the last of five sons who had dropped off one by one of fever, David found a little eager old man, who instantly recognised and spoke to him by his real name. He haughtily denied it. The man eyed him for some time in silence, as he stood there, in a costume half-savage, half-European.

"Mr. Stuart," said he, "your appearance is too remarkable, and the occasion on which I last saw you was too painful, not to have impressed you on my recollection. I am rather surprised that you do not remember me ; but they say I am much altered. I am the partner in the house of Nevil and Co., who was sent to meet you at Marseilles !"

A groan of execration burst from David's lips, as he turned to leave the hut. The other caught him by the arm :

"Hear me. I tell you now, as I told you then, that a little courage and patience would have prevented all that took place ; that even

now, courage and patience might retrieve much. I told poor Nevil so. It was to no purpose. He was a feeble-souled creature; and he shot himself. I am convinced, if we had all stood our ground together, at the time I saw you at Marseilles, such a catastrophe need not have occurred. It published our disgrace; it involved matters which required the coolest investigation, in a shameful mystery; no one could explain them; for Nevil had been, as you know, principal acting partner in our firm.

“This is the way mercantile men are lost. A man gets into difficulties, and he is thrown into prison where he can neither help himself or his creditors; or he shoots himself to escape censure; to escape shame; as if a man's life were not, in such a case, as much among his liabilities as anything else he possesses—as if he were not bound, while he exists, and exists with sane faculties, to devote those

Assets?

faculties and that life, to the interests of those whom his folly has ruined. Courage, Mr. Stuart, courage and patience are as necessary in the mercantile profession as in any other. What would be thought of the colonel of a regiment who destroyed himself in a difficult position on the field? What of a ship's captain who leaped overboard in a storm? Why, the regiment might have cut its way through, the ship might have floated, under other guidance! Why should a mercantile man be a coward? I'm not a coward, Mr. Stuart. I'm a little, poor, feeble, unhappy old man, living in strangely altered circumstances, having seen heavy afflictions: but I'm not a coward. And I'm not a thief; I declare before God I never had a dishonest thought, and I don't believe poor Nevil had either; I'm sure he hadn't; I'll clear his memory and I'll help his children yet! I've lost a good many of my own. I've lost four as fine lads as you ever saw, that I thought

would be company and help here, through fever and sickness ; but there's two in India hard at it, Mr. Stuart ; sifting accounts, getting the Indian partners to book up, getting law matters looked into, getting embarrassments explained ; in constant correspondence with me by Halifax. We've gone on that way, for four years and more ; law matters, and money matters, and the affairs of a bankrupt firm, ain't settled in a day ; especially when the acting partner shoots himself without arranging or docketting a single paper in his *escritoire* ; but I tell you, things are brightening, Mr. Stuart ; things are brightening ; and twelve months more, may see us all in a very different position from what we are now."

A moan from the sickly lad in the corner of the hut, roused David from the amazed stare with which he was contemplating the little eager, wiry, energetic old man. They both turned—

"Ah ! my poor boy," said Mr. Weston,

"if it wasn't for his health, we should do cheerily enough. Well, boy, well?" and he lifted him into a sitting posture.

"I thought I was in India," said the lad, looking confusedly round; "I was dreaming of India; under the palm-trees, at Benares; the lovely palm-trees in the sun. Oh, God! this is a cold lone place!" and with a weak burst of weeping, immediately followed by the ague shiver of his fever, the lad sunk his head on his hands.

"This is bad, Harry," said the old man; "don't give way. We'll go back to India some day; we'll go back to India."

Then, turning wistfully to David, he said:

"I feel like Abraham with young Isaac on the hill; and I feel," added he, shaking off the momentary depression, "as strong a confidence in God! We none of us know what sacrifices God will demand of us, or how He will help us out of them; but we know

that His hand is over us, and that we are to do His will."

David himself could not have told, why at that instant he remembered Margaret. Something in the turn of the sentence, and its spirit of devout cheerfulness, recalled to him that sweet voice, that matchless face, in the dull log-cabin far away, with the withered old man and his sick pallid son. He assisted the latter to rise; he spoke to him; he told him that he too had been in India; he tried to interest, to cheer him.

The lad looked at him with pleasure; with surprise.

"You've a very agreeable way of helping, Sir," said he; "you're as gentle as a woman. I shall think I've got a nurse." He leaned back as he spoke, with a fitful smile.

"I knew it," said the old man, eagerly; "I knew things would brighten. I have not seen Harry smile—not, the Lord knows when,

I take it as a good omen ; I take meeting with you, Mr. Stuart, as a good omen. I've no doubt we shall have good news next time my correspondent at Halifax gets the letters. '*Nil desperandum*,' Mr. Stuart, that's my motto. Things will brighten, Sir ; things will brighten."

CHAPTER XVI.

WAVERING.

THINGS did brighten. Not within twelve months from the time David Stuart and Mr. Weston met ; not till eight long years from the date of Eleanor's marriage and of Stuart's supposed suicide ; never—to the extent that the sanguine old man had hoped and expected ; but enough, by the forfeit of all private property, to replace matters in a great measure as they were ; enough to rescue Nevil's memory from the imputation of more than rashness and incapability ; enough to pay back

that monstrous loan which David had made for his own advantage, in the hope of repurchasing Dunleath ; enough to enable old Mr. Weston to sail for India, with a son who had come to meet and congratulate him, and in company with the delicate lad, to whom in his occasional visits to the log-cabin in the far West, David had become so welcome and so dear.

“ I will never forget you, Sir,” said he, as they shook hands ; “ I shall think of you in India. I wish you well back in your own country.”

In his own country ! David had not the courage, and independence, of that lad's father. How could he face the shame, unravel all the past, become an object of malevolent attention among the few who knew him ? The guardian of Sir John Raymond's daughter, who had speculated with her fortune and lost it ; and then by a lucky turn of the cards, was able

to compound with his deserved fate and pay it back again !

In his own country : what country had he ? Was not the announcement of Tib's marriage to Lord Peebles a sufficient indication of his homelessness ?

"Tabitha, daughter of the late Peter Christison, Esq., of Dunleath !"

Of Dunleath ! nonsense ; how was he Christison "of Dunleath ?" It requires to know Scotchmen and the feudal memories that still attach themselves to the possession and hereditary property there, to comprehend how, even sitting in the merchant's counting-house at Quebec, or trafficking among North American savages ; after all sorts of great and small misfortunes, there was still strength in David's heart for irritation at this assumption ; there was still room in his heart for a sigh for "bonny Dunleath !"

No ! to his own country he would not,

could not go: that was the most impossible of all feasible things !

But when he had written his long statement and explanation, making known how he had been saved, and enabled to replace the fortune he had risked ; when he had sealed and directed this to Eleanor ; a great thirst came over David's soul ! To see her, to look once more in her face, with the weight off his heart that had wrapped it in leaden shame so many years ; to hear her say she forgave him ; to judge for himself if she seemed happy.

He thought of her, as the trembling girl that tried in vain to name to him the object of her fancied love ; he thought of her, as the sick child he had nursed through the long fever when he quarrelled with Godfrey on her account. He thought of her, as the strange intelligent little being who had greeted him when first he came from India ; who had spoken to him of old Mr. Fordyce ; who had read to him in the garden the sermon she was

so proud of having copied neatly out : “ *Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.*” He remembered the sound of the child’s silver voice, as if it were but yesterday he heard it. He remembered her fondness for him ; her sweet companionable nature. And David sighed heavily : it was so long since he had seen any one that loved him !

He read over the answers to the inquiries he had caused to be made, respecting those whose interests were bound up in the events which had taken place. Lady Raymond was dead ; Captain Marsden was at sea ; Lady Margaret was in Italy ; Sir Stephen Penryhn he had never seen ; nor the Duke of Lanark, who had been finishing his education abroad when he knew Margaret.

He might go and see Eleanor : if but for a day, if but for an hour, he would be content. He would see her, and immediately return. No letter could give him the repose his heart wanted. He wanted to look on her face, to

stand in her presence a forgiven man. Was it, indeed, so utterly impossible?

The waverer rose, and took two or three hurried turns up and down the apartment. Then he reached down his hat, and went out. He strode swiftly and breathlessly through the long winding street, with its steep flights of steps, that led from the merchant's warehouse in the Lower town; till he reached the citadel over Cape Diamond. On that height he stood and gazed, with a sense of imprisonment and wild desire, like that of the chained eagle at St. Helena.

When at length he descended, and forsook the fortifications in the Upper town, he went to make arrangements for his departure for England in the name by which Mr. Fordyce had introduced him—the name of Lindsay, the only one he was known by at Quebec.

CHAPTER XVII.

RECOGNITION.

ALL that there was to learn or to know of David Stuart's past history, Eleanor had read and re-read a dozen times before his messenger re-appeared at the Castle. She had ceased at length to con over that strange and welcome epistle: she was sitting once more unoccupied, (but oh! how different in mood,) at the window of the bower room, when Sandy came to summon her with the intimation that the stranger guest had arrived. The old man's

agitation had not subsided ; he shook from head to-foot as he delivered his message ; he looked doubtfully at Eleanor, as if wondering whether she had borne the great news, and retained perfect sanity : and in truth Sandy seemed the more discomposed of the two.

Eleanor smiled at him as she rose ; smiled, but uttered no word. She passed onwards, swift and trembling, down the steps of the lower room, across the foot of the great staircase, through the magnificent oak dining-hall, into the breakfast-room adjoining. Her foot never faltered, her strength never failed. She was there ; to speak with the gentleman who had so lately left David Stuart ; who had seen him, living and safe before he sailed for England.

In the impossible conventionalities of the stage, how little disguise is necessary ! How flimsily veiled by all the passionate and masterly acting that has been thrown away upon

such scenes, is the great untruth of their construction: when some unexpected alteration, sometimes a mere change of costume, is supposed sufficient to blind the eye of love—to cloud the power of memory! Is the voice forgotten, that once thrilled to the heart's core? Is the individuality which marks out every one by some peculiar habit of gesture or carriage, effaced by the lapse of years? Is there any difference, which shall in real life so bar out old associations of thought, that a friend once familiarly known shall stand before us as a stranger? The very contrary is the case; the minutest and most trivial things will enable us to recognise them; and one astonished glance will give us back, all that years and time had taken away.

As Eleanor entered, her eyes swollen with tears, looking searchingly for the person she expected to meet, the figure of a gentle-

man struck her, leaning by the fireplace. His back was towards her; his arm was on the mantelpiece, and his head was bowed down on it: his other hand rested on his hip. He did not move; her step, noiseless and swift, had not disturbed him; he stood there, and she gazed.

A slight convulsive gasp—a pause of intolerable bewilderment—and Eleanor recognised him. Know him! she would have known him only by his hand—that slight delicate hand that had so often smoothed her hair down in childhood: whose agonized pressure, the day of their farewell, had hung like a steel bar on her heart!

“Merciful Heaven! David Stuart! It is you, yourself!”

He turned. It was the same face, altered by years and suffering. He looked on her with the living glance of those long-lost eyes. There was no embrace—no gladness;

they did not even shake hands. Panting, her heart fluttering like a frightened bird, Eleanor stood still and shuddered ; while David Stuart's lips parted with a ghastly smile. He was the first to recover himself ; he came forward, and taking her hand, kissed her lightly on the forehead.

“ You forgive me, Eleanor ; you forgive me all. I knew it ; I knew I could rely on your noble nature. I have lived for this hour—not in vain ! ”

Then Eleanor crept into his arms, and clung and wept there, as they cling and weep who dream that human love and human kindness can shelter them from the storms of life ; and while she wept, her one gleam of happiness, and last great sorrow, coming over her soul in a gush of recollected grief, she murmured to him :

“ Oh ! I had two such sweet children ; but I lost them both ; they were both drowned ! ”

and looking up into his eyes, shining down upon her in all the depth of their pity, it seemed to her once more that she beheld the face of her guardian angel. Yes, her better angel, come to rescue and comfort her in her despair. Scorned of men in vain, exiled in vain, disgraced in vain, he stood there, beloved, revered, idolized, in that woman's heart which leaped at once from misery into a world of gladness, as she wept in his arms. Oh! he was gentle—gentle and kind; with no dreaded embrace, no human caress, did those arms seem to enfold her, until her agitation subsided, and they were able to talk of the past and the future like two friends.

Sweet was her sleep that night; pleasant the waking; fresh and delicious the air of the morning, as she flung open the window, and looked out over the distant hills, and knew that he was near, that he had rested under the very shadow of her own roof; that

she would see him again, as she used to see him at Aspendale, in the young happy days that were past.

And yet there was something very opposite to that frank easy happiness in what was now proposed ; for though, after Eleanor's tender and affectionate reception of him, David at once relinquished the idea of immediate departure, and remodelled his notions of merely receiving her assurances of forgiveness as a preface to his own farewell ; he steadily adhered to his intention of preserving his incognito in the land to which for her sake only he had returned. No reasoning that Eleanor could urge, altered this. He would not brave the shame ; and incur the cold curiosity of some, the open contempt of others. Eleanor must learn to call him Mr. Lindsay ; to his ear it would sound but natural, for he had been called Mr. Lindsay by every one round him for more than eight years. No one knew

him but Sandy, and the poor old man would sooner die than betray him. Lady Raymond, Godfrey Marsden and his wife, the Hindoo Ayah, all who might have recognised him, were removed by death or absence.

Nothing was to be gained by admitting himself to be David Stuart ; a great deal was to be suffered : of prejudice, of disesteem, of discomfort. Eleanor pleaded hard to be allowed to write it to Margaret, but even this was refused.

“It will not add anything to her friendly gladness at all the rest of your intelligence, Eleanor, to know that I have been here ; I shall be gone before she will be on the spot ; and if you reflect for a moment on the chances to which all letters, and especially foreign letters, are exposed, you will see that you might as well advertise my arrival in the papers at once. No, let me be still in America, for all but you. Let me be Mr.

Lindsay the Quebec merchant, as I have been through so many miserable years that I almost seem transformed, even to myself. Write to Sir Stephen that Mr. Lindsay has arrived at the Castle. It will be, perhaps, a convenience to him that we should go through the arrangement of money matters, and the explanations which that will involve, here. As Mr. Lindsay, acting for David Stuart, Mr. Weston, and the representatives of Mr. Nevil, I can meet Sir Stephen on equal ground. It would be painful—impossible to me to meet him, if he knew me. Is he kind, and generous, Eleanor? Is he all that Margaret promised me, for the dear ward of other days? Did you learn to love him quickly and well? Has he been to you the providence of your life, after my crime left you without protection? Are you happy with him?—quite happy?"

Eleanor hesitated. "When I first mar-

ried," said she with some embarrassment, "I made them all promise not to speak of you. I am afraid I must make you give the same sort of promise. Do not let us talk of SirStephen."

David Stuart looked at her with sorrowful surprise: with eager interest. She made an effort to speak playfully. "You must not therefore think that I am married to a sort of Bluebeard. All the keys of the castle are mine;" but the tone could not deceive him.

She was not happy. She did not love this man. Did he deserve her love? if he did, what a misery! To call this perfect, kindly, lovely creature his, and not be beloved by her. David felt a strange sort of compassion for Sir Stephen Penrhyn. But perhaps she loved him, and he maltreated her — maltreated Eleanor! No, that was not possible. It did not seem

possible, as David gazed on her now ; shyly turning from him, seeming to look out at the view, but feeling his eyes on her face. It was not possible. What could man imagine of perfection, that she did not fulfil ? He knew her disposition ; he had known it from a child. He saw the beauty of her womanhood, and he thought it the very ideal of human loveliness and grace. It must be Eleanor, who after all had found it impossible to love the wealthy suitor whom her friends thought a fit choice ! Had she clung then, to the romantic fancy of her girlhood, and thought, as girls will think, of some romance and illusion of preference, to the destruction of her real happiness ? Who could that preference have been for ? David Stuart lost himself in a maze of conjecture.

“Do not look at me with those questioning eyes,” said Eleanor at last. “I ask you, as a favour, not to talk of my husband

to me ; I am not very happy ; but I have no doubt far better women have had much harder fates than I could complain of ; and if I say so much at once, it is that I may say no more, even to you, on this subject."

"I will promise you not to talk of Sir Stephen, Eleanor. I admit" (and this was said with some bitterness) "that I have lost my right to question you. I must remember you are not the child-Eleanor of other days, nor I the guardian whose trust was so abused. We will not speak of him. As to looking at you with questioning eyes, or any other eyes, it will be a more difficult promise to make ; it is so long since I have seen your face ; and it is such a beautiful face !"

"Mine !" said Eleanor, with a sad smile. "I am so altered ; and I am so pale. But I remember—" here Eleanor stopped short ; she was going to say she remembered his

complimenting her on her beauty, with the half-heard verse from Spenser on board the yacht : that she recollected the lines :

“ And every spirit, as it is more pure,
And hath in it the more of heavenly light,
So it the fairer body doth procure
To habit in.”

But it seemed absurd to remind him of his own compliment ; and although the days in which she had loved David Stuart had long been a mournful dream, and nothing more, there was something in the memory of that day that embarrassed her. She paused, and David only answered :

“ Do you think paleness a defect in beauty ? I don't. I think brilliancy an imperfect form of beauty. I think it the fault of one of the most beautiful faces I

used to know—Lady Margaret Fordyce. I wonder is she still beautiful.”

Yes ; Eleanor could assure him that Margaret was still beautiful. And she thought of the days when the beauty of her lovely chaperon thrilled her soul with a vague jealousy, and when, if she had known that David thought brilliancy an imperfect form of beauty, it would have comforted her heart.

She wrote to Sir Stephen, that which David desired should be written ; and Sir Stephen's reply was amply satisfactory. He requested, if Mr. Lindsay could spare the time, that he would remain at the Castle ; it would save Sir Stephen the trouble of a journey to London after his arrival, and in the meanwhile he would write to his man of business in Edinburgh to meet him. Sir Stephen added, that Eleanor was

at liberty now to give directions for the transfer of the money which had been Sir John Raymond's legacy to Godfrey, back to her brother. His whole letter was written in high good-humour, in the most buoyant state of spirits, and so open an exultation at the recovery of Eleanor's fortune, that she was puzzled to think how any one to whom money, being rich, was yet so precious, could have married her without it.

Eleanor laid the letter down. "Do you know that Sir Stephen's man of business in Edinburgh, is Mr. Christison? Either Mr. Christison or Mr. Malcolm will come. Are you not afraid of being recognised by Mr. Christison?"

"I never saw any of the Christisons. I treated for Dunleath through lawyers and by letter. I tell you Eleanor, that it is more likely I should meet an acquaintance on

the upper range of the Himalaya mountains, than here in Scotland. I have lived in Italy, in India, at Aspendale, and in America: I have never lived, except as a boy, in Scotland. If you recollect, when you asked me, long ago, whether I had seen any old friends in Edinburgh, I was obliged to admit I *had* no old friends: a sorry admission: but one which is rather satisfactory than otherwise at present."

For one happy week, Eleanor and David Stuart remained alone at Castle Penrhyn: again they read, and walked, and rode, and sketched together: and Eleanor looked over the drawings made of wild American woods, with their twisted foliage, impermeable undergrowth, swinging lianas, and grand solemn trees, reminding her of Bryant's line:

"The groves were God's first temples."

She copied the likenesses of Indian squaws and their children; she studied the rich colouring of the maple and oak, in fragments of forest scenery. She wondered over the majestic lakes, and waterfalls. She felt as if she saw, in the new world, the world she was accustomed to, magnified a thousandfold.

Then she took David to see her schools; proudly and fondly she impressed upon him, that to this and the early life at Aspendale, she owed all her ideas of usefulness, all her practical power of realizing those ideas. Ever fighting against David Stuart's morbid sense of his degradation, she enlarged on the happy consoling thought, that while he was pursuing his almost hopeless career as a petty fur-trader among unlettered savages, he was in fact the missionary of comfort and hope, among a people he had never seen.

“For I owe it all to you;” she would say; “but for you, I should have remained a languid, frivolous, foolish girl; *you* taught me to think and to feel—to feel that there were others besides myself in this teeming world; to think how I could best serve them. There is nothing here, that is not an enlarged copy of what you made me do at Aspendale; that is not built out of your words; in days when your words were my books, and your will my guide. It is you, who have been, in fact, the providence of these poor people—for they had been much neglected before I came.”

And David smiled and sighed; feeling, not that he was the providence of Eleanor’s poorer tenants, but that if ever Heaven selected an earthly instrument for doing good that resembled one of the angels, it was the fair unselfish creature that walked by his side. And every day that passed,

Eleanor seemed to David more perfect than the day before ; and a gnawing and restless anxiety to see and make acquaintance with the husband of whom they never spoke—of whom it was agreed they never were to speak—took possession of him, and haunted him by night and by day.

But Sir Stephen was still in Wales, and not expected for three or four weeks. The solitude of Eleanor was broken first by other arrivals ; the arrival of Lady Macfarren ; of Mr. Malcolm, as Mr. Christison's representative ; the Duke and Duchess of Lanark ; one or two neighbours to meet them ; and the magnificent Tabitha, Countess of Peebles, daughter of the late Peter Christison of Dunleath, who came spluttering up to the portico, with four horses, and two tiny postilions in little velvet jockey caps, just as some of the party were returning from a walk.

Among them was the Duchess of Lanark, looking very pretty in a plain close straw bonnet; and David, who with instinctive courtesy, lifted some cloak, mantle, or shawl, which entangled itself under Tib's feet, while she was descending and condescending.

Struck by his graceful and distinguished bearing, and aware that two noblemen, as yet unknown to her, were amongst the guests at the castle; Tib shook her fair curls, and smiled her most gracious smile; but having received from the Duchess of Lanark the information that it was only Mr. Lindsay of Quebec, Tib froze like a pond in winter; retracted her smile; and became totally unaware of Mr. Lindsay's existence.

In which she did not resemble the Duchess of Lanark, who, being a Duke's daughter, and a Duke's wife, was less troubled with the recollection of her grandeurs than vulgar Tib,

and cared little who people were, as long as they were clever, elegant, or handsome. I regret to add to this, (which I consider to be meritorious and proper behaviour,) a fact which may subject the sylph-like Duchess to the criticisms of the censorious ; and that is, that in all her life she had never behaved with such coquetry as she did to the supposed Mr. Lindsay. She honestly thought him the handsomest and most agreeable person she had ever seen ; and something of a false romance hit her fancy, to send the poor Quebec merchant pining back to the far West ; having seen such a Duchess, in the Highlands of Scotland, as never could be effaced from his memory !

So she made him write verses in her album, (for she said all Americans had a natural gift of poetry) and she told him the story of putting down the clans, and forbidding the weaving

of tartans; together with a number of other little particulars of Scottish history, which wicked David had heard before—but somehow contrived to appear as if he was listening to for the first time.

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